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THE LORD OF LIFE

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THE LORD OF LIFE

A Fresh Approach to the Incarnation

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BY

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Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.
Heb. xiii. 8.

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PREFACE

THIS book follows a definite and deliberate line of approach to its subject. It is through man to Christ, through human experience, with its struggle and failure in the art of life, to Him who, above all others, has triumphed both in His own person and by His sway over other lives. On any showing, Christ is the central figure in history; and we approach Him through His place in history and His power over men, both in His own day and ever since. In our human experience He stands so close to us, yet towers so high above us! Who is He that He has won and held this place in the world's life? How is His nature related to our nature, which He so marvellously meets and inspires, and how related to the Divine nature, of which He so compels us to think? Asking these questions as our own experience raises them, we come once more upon the answers which Christian minds have found from of old; but they present themselves with new meanings and new emphases. And so, through a fresh contemplation of Christ as Lord of Life, we find a fresh approach to the Incarnation.

Our approach is thus experiential rather than speculative; so also has been the method by which we have come to the view that is here set forth. These chapters are not merely the independent contributions of individual writers. They are the produce of thought and experience shared and compared. They represent the growing convictions of a number of men and women who for several years have worked together in intimate thought and prayer upon religious and theological questions. By the study of a series of subjects which developed one from the other, in the successive Summer Conferences of the

Swanwick Free Church Fellowship, they were led more recently to concentrate upon a presentation of Christ that might meet the needs of man to-day. And they set apart a group of their number to work out more systematically the convictions to which they were consciously being led.

In the "give and take" necessary in such a method of work, we have been very conscious of a gradual stripping away of the accidental and merely individual elements in our experience, whether these have been due to idiosyncrasy or to different denominational tradition; and we have also been conscious that our experience has been enriched both in its content and meaning, and brought nearer to reality, by the widely different types of outlook and experience represented in our very varied membership.

We are well aware that the development which has been fostered by our work as a group is but a stage in an endless process: but it has gone far enough to give us a common vision of truth. This we now wish to share with others. In doing so, we distinguish between the central elements which are of the warp and woof of our joint witness, and those special to any one chapter. Naturally, not all the writers would entirely agree on matters of detail; but, broadly speaking, in what is characteristic of the book as a whole the common agreement of the group may be taken as uttering itself.

A word as to the special standpoint of the Group. The Swanwick Free Church Fellowship, which authorised it, is in many ways an outcome of the Student Christian Movement; and that means at least two things about any work it puts in hand. First, the spirit animating it is vital rather than purely theoretic: it seeks for truth as coextensive with the full range of human experience—thinking, feeling, willing—and expects to find it verified in all these spheres. Next, it seeks to escape as far as may be from the limitations of any denominational standpoint, in which aim the Swanwick Free Church Fellow-

ship has always been greatly helped by the varied contacts it has had with the sister "Anglican Fellowship"—itself also an indirect outcome of the Student Christian Movement. This being so, it seems only fitting that the work of our Group should appear under the auspices of the Movement itself.

While this book was in preparation, one of the contributors, Dr. H. T. Andrews, died, leaving his manuscript finished. He was a distinguished scholar and always a humble-minded learner in the school of Christ. His friends who pay their thankful tribute to his memory recognise how deeply the experience of which he writes was his own.

Finally, we wish to associate this book with the dear memory of Mabel Spencer, who has also gone from our midst. Repeatedly she has been the hostess of our Fellowship, and during the making of this book her house and garden were the home of all the meetings of our Group, while she served with hand and heart, unwearied and unanxious, and surrounded us with the goodness and gladness of a simple life.

May 1929.

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CHAPTER I

REALITY IN RELIGION

I

Religion and Reality

§ 1. *The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life.*

Without doubt the most perplexing feature of religion to-day is the sense of unreality which clings to it. Not only the Philistine but the good man is puzzled because he cannot feel as the hymn he has just sung suggests a Christian man ought to feel, nor is he as sure as his father was of the universal providence of God. What puzzles him most is the whole doctrine of the Incarnation, so staggering in its claim, so confident and comprehensive in its analysis of the nature of God and man. Many are beginning to feel that such conceptions can no longer be taken seriously or exercise their wonted influence over heart and will. "Custom and reverence may prevent our casting them aside altogether; but they have ceased to be a reality to us. So we find many whose religion consists of a few platitudes remembered from childhood, seeds still lying by the wayside, which have never struck root so as to become a living growth. . . . Human respect may seal their lips but in their hearts they wonder what others can find in religion and why they speak of it as a necessity of life. Such minds are an easy prey to the shallow sophist who has no difficulty in persuading them of the untenableness of their religious notions; nor is it with much of a wrench that they part from the faith

which they have never understood and never loved." [1] The problem is well summed up in the title of a book published a few years ago, *The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life.*

The doctrine of the Person of Christ is the special phase of the problem now before us and it is central to the whole issue. The enquirer is often met with a forceful and logically presented re-statement of the orthodox case. How account for the impression made by Jesus on His disciples, on the Early Church, on history, how account for His own claims, on any more rational and probable assumption than His Deity? It is very hard indeed to find a logical answer to this line of argument, but it entirely fails to quicken personal faith; precisely in the same way that the usual arguments for the existence of God, with all their cogency, fail to supply us with personal confidence in God as our Father.

§ 2. *This Unreality due to an Abstract Approach.*

In matters of religion and experience there is danger in using an *a priori* method which properly belongs only to certain mathematical and highly abstract sciences. Such a method almost assumes that a right theology is an indispensable preliminary to religion, that God is found at the end of an argument and that faith in Christ as our Lord and our God is the conclusion of a syllogism.

Even a consideration of what Jesus has effected on the minds of men can be an abstract approach, if we are not shown just why they have felt in this peculiar way, if we are left unconvinced that we should ourselves have felt like that if we had met Him. To read that hundreds of people are stirred by a great picture, to hear a good deal of indirect criticism of the picture, the artist and his methods, to trust the æsthetic judgment of connoisseurs, is no substitute for the actual experience of seeing it oneself and being affected, however simply and imperfectly, by its direct appeal. What is really needed is a *recapitu-*

[1] Tyrrell, *Hard Sayings,* p. 32.

lation [1] of the Gospel experience, by which we, as it were, relive or re-experience, point by point and stage by stage, the victory over perplexity and temptation that Jesus Himself won. Our life is a journey through a rough piece of country in which we are often bogged, lost in the jungle, led astray by will-o'-the-wisps. But Christ has accomplished this journey successfully, and we must pursue our way with the "pioneer of our faith," re-enacting His conflict in imagination and thus recovering the identical experience of the apostolic age. Only when we have thus triumphed with Jesus can we know how the disciples felt in relation to Him. Only then can we enter into the unique relation to Jesus which is the normative Christian experience. All theology is but the application of what this unique experience implies. So much apologetic never even hints at this as necessary; and that is why it must fail, however much we may be persuaded to accept on credible second-hand evidence, or as the result of logical deduction.

Neither the Nature of God, the Person of Christ, nor even the nature of man can be regarded as static objects capable of exact analysis and description. Yet much theology adopts the method of laboratory dissection only applicable to a dead body. Spiritual beings are living beings, and life means a thousand relations with other beings and the world—relations of interest and sympathy and striving and loving. Understanding must begin with actuality not with cold analysis. To know God we must watch Him at work and see what He does. To know Christ we must penetrate into the inner meaning of His conduct in this and that situation. However true it may be that Jesus fulfils the rôle set forth in orthodox Christology; that the pre-existent Son enters into human flesh to manifest the true nature of man, "to break the power of cancelled sin," and bring us the gift of the spirit;

[1] I use the word *recapitulation* in its scientific sense, as when we say that the individual in his development *recapitulates* the stages passed through in the development of the race.

yet in these days it is no good merely telling us these things, dogmatically declaring a Divinely ordained scheme. What the historic Jesus actually did among men, as a man, must both provide us with our data and create our personal experience. Only then will the orthodox doctrines that aptly account for these experiences be convincing to us.

§ 3. *The New Testament Experience, Practical.*

A true Christology, then, needs a reappropriation of New Testament experience before it can have any vitality, any truth for us, any effective meaning. But by a reappropriation of experience one does not mean merely the inexplicable stirring of the feelings in an unwonted way in the presence of Christ, but a profound understanding of how Jesus faces our common problems. It is such an understanding which carries with it the unique stirring of our deepest feelings of reverence, as it did two thousand years ago for those who first saw Him face these problems.

The method we advocate is thus more than a pathway to a correct theory. What is valuable is not the theory but the experience itself, for it is the experience of "being saved." To see life as Jesus saw it is to know and love God and to be delivered from the bonds of sin; and this is the whole purpose of His life, the whole purpose of God for man, the whole purpose of Christianity. To recover the New Testament experience is what we must be concerned about. Belief in some theory of the Two Natures of Christ, however true, can never effect this. Nevertheless, when we have made that experience our own, we may feel urged to make explicit the assumptions on which our experience is based, and thereby find the experience itself enriched by a deeper understanding of what is involved in it.

II

Knowledge of God

§ 4. *Knowledge of God is Knowledge of Life.*

Our solution of the Christological difficulty is thus seen to be part of a much wider question—the nature of our experience of God. For if Christ is not known by understanding theories of His life and work, neither is God known by considering theories of His relation to the universe. What is more, our mode of coming to know God is itself intimately related to our salvation through Christ, since the true way of coming to know God is only through that very knowledge of life that Jesus brings us, and that is our salvation.

For whatever we make of life is really what we make of God. God is responsible for life and manifests Himself within it and in no other way. To know life perfectly, as Jesus did, is to be wholly reconciled to its tasks and disciplines, even to the suffering which our fellowship with sinful man lays upon us. And this is to find God's purpose in its whole scope, even in sacrifice and the patient endurance of wrong. This is to enter the Divine Presence and to find the Father Himself behind life's experiences. To see and love God's purpose, to unite oneself to it, as Jesus did, is the only way in which we can come to see and love God.

§ 5. *Sacred and Secular must not be divorced.*

Yet quite another view of God and knowledge of Him is prevalent, and it is such a view that leads to the unreality of religion. This view separates God and life, as though over and above our "secular" tasks there were a separate "duty to God," as though God could come to us quite apart from the world of social requirements. This is a perilous path and lands us either in a non-ethical mysticism or an ecclesiastical legalism, or even a magical sacramentalism. It puts Jesus on the Godward side of an

unbridgeable gulf and leads to theories of the Incarnation which struggle in vain to understand how the human and divine can meet in Jesus. If the divine is, *ex hypothesi,* other than and apart from human life, it cannot be got across the gulf and there is no alternative but to say that Jesus, if divine, must be non-human. Beliefs in the non-human Divinity of Jesus were once prevalent in the Church and although condemned they linger on in much popular theology and are responsible for a good deal of the unreality of Jesus for men. The corresponding effect in the everyday world is "secularism," which we find in the Church as well as out of it. Human life, not being conceived as in itself within the sphere of the sacred, is either negligible from a spiritual point of view or subject to certain negative regulations to prevent its misuse damaging our spiritual life. Nothing is more dangerous than this draining of the sacred from the common life; it leaves it without its very soul, a corpse which can only putrefy.

The effect on religion itself is as devastating. Religion may then become a pure abstraction, or pure feeling, out of all relation to conduct except as regards certain prohibitions. Or it may have another influence on religion, one less often noticed. It may degrade religion itself to the merely secular. The supernatural is discarded as beyond our experience, God is unknown and in Himself unapproachable, but we have His world to live in and its social duties to perform. This is Deism. It may end in a theory of social reform or a platitudinous kind of ethicalism; but it has lost the guiding hand of God in life and history and the sacred touch of His very presence in the pressure of life's demands upon us. It is therefore powerless and unprogressive.

§ 6. *Personality is true knowledge of Life.*

These errors lead to the death of religion in the very attempt to exalt it. They arise, as we have said, from the conception that God is not known to us through the

life He gives us to live, but is to be reached by turning one's back on life; that in fact "experience is not a manifestation, but a veil which for moments waves aside and gives glimpses of reality"; that there is some "direct revelation of God which is not through the experience of the world," "a state of exalted dismissal of the conflicts of life." On the contrary, "real revelation is in facing life with the highest activities of all the powers of the mind." "Experience is revelation: the more distinctive personal insight grows the more we see." [1] The objections to this view, however, are not merely practical, they are also philosophical. The existence and development of personality are only conceivable as the unfolding experience of that which constitutes real life for man and the growing knowledge of God Himself through whom such life is made possible. Our growing knowledge of the external world is the same thing as the growth of the mind itself: we are what we know; and this knowledge is never the mere piling up of information in our brains, it is always and invariably purposeful knowledge, relative to the true business of living.

We do not just grow as an embryo or seed might be conceived as growing, by the mere unfolding of potentialities, with little conscious connection with any environment; on the contrary, growth is response to the insistent demands of social environment, through which the Divine calls to us and acts upon us. In so far as we learn to understand life's situations accurately and respond adequately we *know* and we *live*. It is by experience and by no other way that personality or soul is made. *Soul is that which knows the world truly and responds faithfully.*

§ 7. *All true knowledge is for Life.*

This has a most important bearing on the true conception of religion. Knowledge of the world is not merely

[1] John Oman, "Mysticism and its Expositors," *Hibbert Journal,* April 1928.

knowledge of facts, a logical piecing together of our experience in relation to the material world, but also knowledge of right aims, that is to say ethical standards. From the standpoint of ethics, personality is right functioning in the social environment. To find "oneself," to grow up, is to discover "one's station and its duties," to be in right relations to everybody around us. This is to know the world in the most profound sense of all, for it is to find its true purpose. On the other hand it would be equally true to say that the external world makes us. The external world—which is far more than the material world for it includes the meaning of the material world—makes us by calling forth imperatively our correct response, both practically and ethically.

This practical equating of knowledge of God with a right relation to life may be thought to imply an equation of God with the world in some pantheistic way. But, in the first place, we by no means take the world as it is, but as it ought to be, as reflecting the true nature of God, and secondly, we are exclusively concerned with the particular purpose *revealed in* the world. But *What* is revealed *in* and *through* something else is by no means identified with it, any more than a painter is identical with his picture.

§ 8. *Our Dependence on the External World.*

We can thus see the reasonableness of the philosophy which tells us that a world which moulds us, if we respond faithfully to a noble ethical purpose, makes of us and our fellows increasingly perfect personalities by its own pressure upon us. Such a world is the very reality through which God works and is made known to us as we grope our way into the perfection already to be found in it. To respond to our environment and fulfil all its demands is, therefore, to develop our minds and characters, to become individuals, and at the same time to know the real world, to know its meaning, and to know and live in harmony with God.

To know God, to believe, to obey Him, to have communion with Him, is therefore far from some spiritual occupation detached from life, it is only reached through a right understanding of life itself.

In this view the dualism of sacred and secular disappears. The artificial and abstract problem of getting a static, transcendent deity into relation with a limited universe no longer exists. However mysterious the whole business may be, however inexplicable, there it is in full swing.

III

The Nature of Sin

§ 9. *Why do some make wreck of Life and Personality?*

But leaving for the moment this digression into the real meaning of "knowledge" and "personality" let us turn to the more practical problem of our failure to grow into right and normal relations with life. As a matter of fact we do not all find God in life. Some of us indeed so bungle the whole affair that we are found at last hating and resenting it, bewildered and in despair, perhaps wishing to make a violent end of it all. As for others, so obviously distorted are their values and standards that the world as they conceive it bears but the slightest relation to reality. When this is so, personality is perverted and sinks into the disintegration of sin and mental disease, which are not far removed. To know truly and to function normally is to master life, to live and be; to sin is to be mastered by life and to die. From this point of view we may find faith among the Gentiles and infidelity among the believers. A man may worship a God of theory and feeling on Sunday and yet make of life precisely the same as his irreligious friend. He may not realise it, but his God is precisely the same as his friend's God, if they agree as to "the assumptions upon which they habitually act." Another man may be reacting to life with great

sensitiveness but may profess no religion, but none the less God is the source and power behind the purpose He has seen and yielded to.

The fact of sin, as thus indicated in the existence of lost and destroyed personalities, means that God's plan for our growth to individual perfection, in bonds of fellowship with one another and love to Him, is marred. The overcoming of sin becomes, therefore, the necessary achievement of religion. Our aim can no longer be simply to grow normally but to wrestle with and overcome what is abnormal. The business of religion is redemption. The function of Christ is not merely to set a good example but to destroy sin and its power over us. Let us, in order to see how Christ delivers us, look a little more closely at the meaning of sin.

§ 10. *Sin is failure to respond to the requirements of environment.*

Sin is rooted, as we have seen, in untruth. It is failure to see things as they really are, to value things as, indeed, we ought, to respond as life requires. It is seeking to bend life to our desires rather than yielding ourselves to life's claims. It is the refusal to harmonise, discipline and integrate our instinctive desires in a conformity to the true man we were intended to become. We prefer rather to indulge in the indiscriminate gratification of desire. The true man, the normal man, is simply a man whose desires are so exercised as not to conflict with the desires of others, or, more positively, who finds himself in a relation of reverence for the personality of others, part of a social whole in which he lives. The abnormal man is ego-centric and out of relation to others.

§ 11. *The consequences of sin as seen in man's "false worlds" and systems.*

But when distorted visions of life, false ambitions, wrong ideals spread among men, a *construction* appears,

which is more than the perversion of a number of personalities—an artificial construction, imaginative, rational, and social, which becomes a tradition binding and shaping men's lives. This may be called a "world," or even "The World." It may consist of myths, religions, legends, laws, customs, priesthoods, temples, standards of life and speech and thought, curious customs and speculations, which together make up a kind of embodied "world view." This may be in one case a civilisation like that of ancient Egypt, or in another case, some false religious system; or it may be a false movement within a much truer civilisation or religion. A system of interests and values of a perverted sort often appears in society as a kind of eddy within the general stream of a corrupt social life; thus we speak quite commonly of the "Racing World," the "Night Club World," and so on. It is important to consider how accurate the designation "world" is in such cases, for the personalities who live within such spheres are in themselves the creation and reflection of these perverted activities and values. Both their individual souls and the objective world they know and see and believe in and reach towards is of this peculiarly distorted and unreal character. Finally, even the whole world-order may "lie in the Evil One," the whole of human life being honeycombed with spiritual idolatry.

The Idol is the symbol of such delusion, both on its theoretical and its practical side. Comparative religion lends strong support to this, for it shows us the fourfold phenomenon of idol, delusion, corrupt social system and disease of personality in various historical and existing forms. This is not so friendly and tolerant a view of non-Christian religions as that to which we have recently grown accustomed, but the missionary endorses it and so does the psychologist. "Holding down the truth in unrighteousness" does seem to be the essential feature in heathenism.

§ 12. *Religious Error as a Mode of Life.*

Thus we see that a false religion is not merely a false conception of God, a theory or speculation resting on the surface of the mind so to speak, a mere error in intellectual calculation in no special or necessary relation to the springs of action. On the contrary, it is essentially a false reaction to life, an embodiment of error and sin simultaneously. It is like a bridge built by an engineer who has mistaken his stresses and strains—a structure ultimately unable to bear its own weight and destined to complete collapse.

This line of approach gives a fresh and more realistic meaning to sin and its effect on personality. Personal sin is also in all circumstances idolatry, the smallest sin is of the same nature as the darkest crimes of heathendom, and expanded in scope will wreck a world. For it is a wilful misapprehension of life's purpose and rebellion against it. Such personal failure to adjust oneself to reality seeks refuge, so the psychologist explains, in illusions and cloaks itself in insincerities; from these arise mental diseases such as double or disintegrated personalities, repressed complexes, obsessions and accompanying misery, despair or even madness.

§ 13. *The Root of Sin.*

An important question, relevant especially to the question of redemption, arises at this point. How is it that we ever fall into such illusions and insincerities? What is the root of sin? If we can answer this we shall be on the way to see what kind of corrective is necessary to deliver us from its bonds. Sin appears to take its origin in a certain reluctance to accept the discipline of instinct and desire which the Divine Love and Wisdom has ordained and imposes on us through the guidance of conscience and the ideal. True self-development and self-expression are to be found in obedience to the true end or purpose of human life, but self-will prefers an indis-

criminate surrender to impulse. Thus instead of our lives being controlled by the real end of man, our impulses pull us hither and thither as appetite and circumstances stimulate one or other of them. This freedom from rational and ideal control is perfect slavery, just as the service of the highest good is perfect freedom. The temptation which betrays us is our reluctance to prune and regulate desire in the interest of the ideal man. The demands of life and duty and fellowship appear to be too hard, they conflict with our immediate good, life's claims appear to threaten bankruptcy, we are afraid to throw our lives away in order to find them. So we are frightened into cowardly compromise and self-deception, which mask and excuse our sin even from ourselves, as psycho-analysis has so abundantly demonstrated.

IV

Salvation through Christ

§ 14. *The succour we need is found through Revelation.*

We can now see just where we need succour in order to triumph over the cowardice which betrays us into this failure and frustration of our lives, with its climax as rebellion against sacrifice and renunciation. What is needed is such insight into the nature of the true life as God wills it, as will enable us courageously to submit to all the demands of love. This we get only through Revelation.

What we mean by Revelation is the demonstration or manifestation in a human life of how God really intends us to live and why His way is the best for us. Thus the Old Testament prophet found loving wisdom and a righteousness not inconsistent with our highest welfare where others had suspected the austere taskmaster; or even unreason or blindness; in the harsh claims of life.

Man in his long history has always been troubled by "homesickness" for the ideal world to which he properly belongs, yet it was hard for him to accept these leadings and disciplines in his earlier stages of evolution. With all his willingness to see the truth and do the right the prophet could not quite clear the issue. The time was not yet ripe, world possibilities were not yet clear, national ambitions were not yet played out, history and religion and psychology had still a long way to go.

But the prophet found vision enough to walk by where other men still trembled in the darkness. He learnt to trust to God's Will even in the most distressing sacrifices demanded of him. The leading was authoritative enough to conscience even though the full meaning and purpose was still obscure. This is faith. Thus by faith and the obedience which springs from faith the prophets were reconciled to life as just and good and from the hands of a gracious God, in spite of all appearances to the contrary; and this led them into even deeper experiences through which they saw more clearly the real purposes of God, till in Jesus the last step in prophetic obedience leads to His complete understanding of God's purpose, His complete surrender to life's claims, His perfect knowledge of the Father.

§ 15. *Jesus as the fulfilment of Revelation.*

The prophets had been led, inspired, checked by a half-seen vision of the ideal life: but at last that ideal is wholly seen and perfectly obeyed. Seeing it accepted and set forth in the life of Jesus we realise that His life is God's purpose for man. He is the perfect personality who has responded perfectly to His environment and its implicit plan. His is the first perfectly realised world: but as the firstborn among many brethren He must introduce us all into that same fulness of personality and into that same world. This world, once we have adapted ourselves to it and developed it socially comes to embody in appropriate customs, institutions and standards of life

that visible kingdom of Realm of God which is the goal of humanity.[1]

Placed in just those circumstances which tempt us into cowardice and insincerity and sin, Jesus so fully perceived the divine purpose and possibilities latent in the conditions of human life, He was so perfectly obedient to the heavenly vision and command that He gladly accepted the whole situation and performed the things which love and truth and duty demanded, cost what it might. He obeyed "as a son." He so responded to all that life asks of men that His personal life became a demonstration of what life may be, free, joyous, fearless and peaceful; life which is at home in the world as God's, in spite of all, nay, in and through all. This was His secret of how to triumph in life, and it was simultaneously His demonstration of God's real nature and of His Mind, His purpose, for humanity.

We come back to our starting point. God cannot be conceived as mere Being. Knowledge of God is not abstract knowledge. Its only real meaning is in relation to God's business with men, in creating them and setting them in the world to fulfil His plan, and in revealing to them the vision of His purpose which accompanies obedience. Knowledge of God, or of life, for they are the same, is essentially knowledge for action. It was this type of knowledge which Jesus had.

§ 16. *How Jesus saves.*

But this knowledge which Jesus has, He communicates to us not merely by verbal explanation but much more effectively by living out a man's true part in God's scheme of things, and this in sharp contrast to our bungling, our

[1] It may be thought that we are conceiving God Himself as evolving, as man slowly masters life. But all personal life that can ever be achieved exists already, in essence, in God. This explains the teleological pressure involved in human progress. True evolution is always seeking and finding a path already potentially laid down. Our knowledge of God grows as the world, *as it is for us,* changes; but God as He is, and the true world, as purposed, remain "over us" as transcendent and unchangeable realities.

compromise and failure. Just where we miss the points and run off the line He goes straight on, passing triumphantly through crisis after crisis that wreck ordinary men. Thus in His actual life, He convinces us not merely of the bare rightness of duty but of its desirability and beauty. We cannot but confess it to be the more excellent way.

This is true Manhood, true and full and joyful Life, and this, too, is God. We cannot at once attain unto it, but we can worship it. It is utterly convincing and satisfying to our conscience, to our soul's deepest insight. It is a final revelation. As such, if we dwell with it and let it penetrate our thinking and judging, it will in time redeem us. This is our emancipation from illusion, for upon the rock of this fact the world's lies and shams are shattered.

§ 17. *The uniqueness of Jesus due to the unique content of His life.*

This absolute quality of the life of Jesus, manifested in His concrete experiences of conflict with worldly standards, is unique in history; as a matter of fact, no one comes anywhere near doing for us what Jesus did. As we apprehend it, too, in our contact with Him, this uniqueness is *felt* by us in a unique way. This impression has been variously described. Men have spoken of a "self-committing faith in Him of the same quality as the faith they have in God," or of Jesus having the "value of God for them," or of instinctively worshipping Him. But let it be clearly noted that apart from that practical mastery of life in the face of sin which gives His life its significance, a bare feeling of Divinity about Him is utterly worthless; we feel as we do about Jesus because of what His life was like. Jesus is not to be worshipped because logic and theology prove Him to be Divine, but because all that is in Him is Divine, in the sense that it compels our assent to its authoritative demonstration of the true way of life for mankind.

V

The Doctrine of the Incarnation

§ 18. *The effect of Jesus on the spirit of man.*

This morally commanding demonstration of "the way of life," given by Jesus, has a striking effect on the mind and spirit of man. Even if a man tries to argue over the precepts he dare not question the example. Ultimately the righteousness of Jesus cannot be argued about, it has got to be felt, and as a matter of fact it *is* felt by everyone, even those who do not call themselves Christian. But who is this who is characterised by such invariable completeness and rightness in the face of almost every imaginable human perplexity and temptation? Who is this that lays upon our consciences an unescapable obligation to do likewise? Who is this to whom, as Lord of Life, is conceded a unique and absolute leadership and sufficiency, a devotion and loyalty which we ought not to pay to any creature but only to God?

§ 19. *Christ and Evolution: the Act of God.*

In the doctrine of "emergent evolution" a function pertaining to a lower stage becomes elaborated and refined, until, at some point indistinguishable by us, it passes over into the function proper to the higher stage; and that, as the philosophers tell us, not by mere spontaneous unfolding from within, but by creative act "from above," when preparation through elaboration on the lower level is complete. So in contemplating Christ, human faith in and loyalty to normal goodness is wrought to such a pitch that, without a break and yet with a distinct sense of difference, it passes over into a reverence we ought only to pay to God. Some would go further and say that there comes into it an element of awe and sense of the unutterably holy and majestic such as implies distinct perception of the eternal and Divine as such. This feeling, this coercive experience, with its moral and experimental ground in the

triumph of Jesus over life, gives to the early Church its characteristic experience and thought of Christ, which it is the business of theologians to study and to account for as adequately as may be.

§ 20. *The Incarnation as the theological implication.*

From this the theologian may go on to infer that the "nature" underlying the personality of Jesus must also be unique, in order to be adequate to produce a reaction of worship identical with that which God alone inspires. But prior to such theological inference there stands the growing consensus of Christian experience, acknowledging the Lordship of Christ, worshipping Him as men worship God, and tracing to Him the impulses which have inspired the Church at its best and continue to uplift it to higher levels of insight and action. The theologian confronted with these data is unable to account for them on any less assumption than that implied in a doctrine of the Incarnation. He is constrained to say that this is how we might expect the Incarnation of God—if it were a fact—to work out and reveal itself. There is no absolute proof of such an hypothesis, but there is not a better one, and that is all reason can say. Other and lesser theories create more difficulties than they remove, and do not cover all the facts. Hence it was that out of "the fact of Christ" and the fact of a normal human reaction to that fact, namely the Christian experience, there grew historically and inevitably the New Testament idea that God "the Word"—that is, God as revealed to man more generally and indistinctly in all creation and in human nature—"became man" or veritably human, thus becoming for mankind the Truth, the Way and the Life.

§ 21. *The Doctrine of the Two Natures.*

It is possible to stop here, and many shrink from and distrust any attempt to state with more precision the implications of the Christian experience. Enough for them that it is the apprehension of the soul by the Divine in Jesus,

and that there is no one else in history who has redeemed men like this and compelled their worship. Those who hold this view are, as a rule, severely critical of all "static" conceptions of God, and are in special reaction from a "block universe"; they prefer to speak of "eternal becoming" and are concerned chiefly with life's movement towards some undefined goal of human history. Aiming to be strictly empirical, they would deal with individuals as actually responding to a series of concrete situations, some are even purely "behaviourist."

But to rest in passing events and shifting experiences is to attempt to stand on a sort of quicksand. However striking and awe-inspiring and worshipful some of these experiences may be, how do we know that we have here a manifestation of the permanent and eternal which shall not pass away? If there is to be any real and revealing relation between God and man at all, we must allow there is some affinity of nature between them, whereby the human may truly be said to be *capax dei* a belief which lifts Christianity out of the welter of those religions which think of human nature as something gross, alien from Deity and perfection. Man is not "wholly other" than God: he is dependent indeed in idea as in fact, but as a son, not as a slave or a thing. On the other hand, such a sense of dependence is the experience which saves us from pantheistic identification with Deity. What we are so utterly dependent upon morally is certainly outside us; it is what we are not, the unattained, especially in conduct; this is the Divine, which in *relation* to men is Absolute and Independent. But Jesus is found in experience to be in precisely this relation to man; and hence, from the standpoint of man obeying and worshipping, Jesus is on the side of the Divine, the non-contingent, the superhuman; though at the same time from His own standpoint He Himself is in precisely the human relation to a God other than Himself. This is the plainest of all facts about Jesus, but the hardest of all to explain. The doctrine of the "two natures" tries to do justice to Him in these two different

relations, it is "a fence to guard a mystery," not to explain it; and it is a main purpose of this book to investigate that relation of men to Jesus which is of the nature of man's dependence on the Divine. What man hungers for is some assurance of an abiding and eternal Reality on which his own changeful life depends, to guarantee the intuitions of his moral sense and the unique glory of Christ and so give abiding and eternal value to the deepest elements in human experience. It is precisely this twofold truth that both philosophy and religion seek to supply, each in its own way. The unchangeable reality behind all things, if believed in to the exclusion of the changeable elements of experience, or if so believed as to make the latter an "illusion," is certainly to be criticised; but why not hold on to the equal validity of *both sides* of the antithesis? Is not philosophy always at loggerheads when there is insistence on exclusive extremes? Similarly a dogmatic theology without concrete religious experience is unreal; while an experience without a theology tends to evaporate.

It is just this that the doctrine of the Two Natures in Christ is trying, however imperfectly, to say. It asks us to recognise two factors and to reconcile them, the Eternal and the Changeable, the fixed reality and the temporal experience, God's action and human history. It begs us not to isolate either series, lest we stultify either God or man in the process. The discussion of "the Two Natures" is thus really a discussion of a unique historical figure as the actual meeting of the Eternal and the temporal on the plane of human experience. Here *is* the demonstration in fact of the philosophical paradox. What may be torn asunder in abstract thought, to the peril of mind and soul, God has united in historic fact.

We would not claim finality for any particular formulæ, however "historic"; they merely safeguard values which other formulæ, ancient and modern, seem to us to have missed. They were adopted when Christian theology was able to assume certain definite philosophical categories

current during the fourth and fifth centuries, and were subsequently developed into a remarkably coherent, clear-cut and common sense philosophical system. At the present time, *per contra,* Christian thinkers hold quite divergent metaphysical theories, and a single universal Christian philosophy does not exist. Furthermore, whilst the metaphysical system assumed by the Fathers could not be suspected of being in its very nature inconsistent with Christianity, many contemporary systems do fall under this suspicion.[1] If the time should ever come when all Christian philosophers are agreed upon a new system, superseding those largely Aristotelian categories, then it will be necessary and useful to recast the creeds. Meanwhile, without binding ourselves to the orthodox formulæ as complete and final statements of the truth, let us realise that what was aimed at in these creeds was a satisfactory guarantee of the fact that God really is correctly represented by Jesus, and a reasoned justification for worshipping Christ as God, which would otherwise be idolatry. The Nicene formula safeguards both religion and reason, and roots religion in what *is* and not merely in what seems to be.

To affirm the eternal element, the God in Jesus rather than some hybrid kind of secondary divinity, is only the truest way of setting the Incarnation in organic connection with the "universally constitutive activity of God." The term "substance," which is often boggled over, is no more than a rather poor Latin substitute for a Greek term, *ousia,* which is in itself quite unexceptionable, standing as it does for *what we mean by any object of our thought when we treat it as abidingly real* [2]—its essence, as reveal-

[1] It is doubtful whether *Realism, Vitalism, Neo Idealism,* to mention a few prevalent philosophies, are really compatible with Christian Theism, although Christian thinkers frequently attempt to combine one or other of them with their theology.

[2] See Scott Lidgett, *The Nicene Creed and Philosophy* in the *Review of the Churches* for January 1927, who points out that *ousia* is carefuly defined both by Plato and Aristotle to mean "that which is"; see *Phaedo* 92 where the soul is stated to exist before it comes into the body, to have an existence in itself, to have an *essence* belonging to it which bears the

ing itself in its functions. As a mere intellectual dogma with which it is sought to operate as a religious instrument, it is of course useless and dangerous. Our method of approach safeguards us from the perennial abuses of dogmatism, but does not commit the folly of abandoning in principle the dogmatic element in Christianity.

Provided, then, it is the unique experience of God in Christ that constitutes our data, the Nicene formulation of Christ's higher "nature" as Divine is an adequate theological—rather than philosophical [1]—statement, and brings faith to rational expression, so as to give completer utterance to faith's content and to establish its correspondence to and coherence with the entire texture of Reality, in which God reveals Himself.

appellation "that which is." Similarly the Beautiful itself, the Good, the Just, the Holy, are in the same manner "marked with the *seal* of existence." It is through reason rather than through the senses, says Plato, that the soul lights on truth and discovers that which is, such as justice, beauty and goodness, the essence of these, their real existence, what each is ultimately and really. *Substantia* or our "substance" is an altogether misleading translation of such a term.

[1] For the larger "symbolic" element proper to theology, see Chap. V and X.

CHAPTER II

MAN'S NEED OF A DELIVERER

G. E. Darlaston

SYNOPSIS

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(1) The harmony of personality to be achieved. (2) The things that make for harmony. (3) The actual discord and its cause.

II. The Types of Man's Inner Conflict.

(4) Arrested development. (5) Perverted development. (6) Regression. (7) The universality of conflict.

III. Man and His Environment.

(8) Man's place and powers. (9) The possibility of sublimation. (10) Man's true environment.

IV. The Centre of Man's Defeat.

(11) The source of man's failure. (12) The mystery of sin.

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CHAPTER II

MAN'S NEED OF A DELIVERER

I

The Problem of Man's Distracted Self

The characteristic human problem is how to live. Men of to-day are not crying out "What must I do to be saved?" But they are crying out "how to live!" and at times the cry arises to a note of passionate anguish and protest. The heart's cry has not changed, it is still to be saved; but to modern ears the old cry is perhaps too negative, too obsessed with the things from which a man would be saved; whereas the hope of salvation is more commanding when it anticipates, in the full terms of life, the salvation to which man would come.

When we look at this problem closely, we are overwhelmed both with its complexity and its intensity. We see the life of man struggling against the obstructions and denials that meet it, sometimes with magnificent courage and faith,[1] sometimes with deepening despair. It is hampered by physical needs, it is assailed by disease. It is prompted by hope and held up by fear. In some cases man appears to be ill-equipped for the life he has to live; there is the struggle of the incompetent with a situation that is beyond their powers, the multiplicity of demands of which but a few can be met. On the other hand, he often appears to be over-endowed with qualities and powers for which the world finds no worthy place, with dreams of good that can never be realised upon the

[1] Later chapters deal with the Christian solution of the problem stated here. See especially Chapters IV and IX.

earth and with ideals that are counter to all that is. From the tyranny of chance there seems to be no escape and at the last the warfare which is without discharge ceases in death.

In the problem of living there are two elements with which we have to deal, though neither can be entirely separated from the other without "unravelling God's harmonious whole," ourselves and our world. In ourselves we find the raw material out of which our character and personality are to be built up; and the process is by constant interaction between the self and the world we live in.

§ 1. *The Harmony of Personality to be achieved.*

Looked at from a personal point of view, it is the task of every man to bring all the elements of his nature into an effective and harmonious unity. These elements include the instinctive as well as the rational and moral. "The instincts," says M'Dougall,[1] "are the prime movers of all human activity. They supply the driving power by which all mental activities are sustained. All the complex intellectual apparatus of the most highly developed mind is but . . . the instrument by which these impulses seek their satisfaction. Take them away and the organism would become incapable of activity of any kind, it would lie inert and motionless like a wonderful clockwork whose main-spring has been removed, or a steam engine whose fires have been drawn. These impulses are the mental forces that maintain and shape the life of individuals and societies, and in them we are confronted with the central mystery of life and mind and will."

Modern Psychology is emphatic about the range and power of the instinctive elements in life, and some writers reduce all human activity to these terms. But there are moral elements in our nature which at times come into

[1] M'Dougall, *Social Psychology*, p. 44.

conflict with these instinctive activities. It is not that the instincts are immoral. They cannot be classed as immoral or moral. They are part of the *non-moral,* raw material which has to be used for the achievement of personality. When the functioning of instincts incurs the protest of reason or conscience we get conflict. It is here that man differs from the animal. The animal has no conflict. Animal life is instinctive, and by following its instincts an animal maintains the harmony it was born with, and lives in health and happiness. It is a sheer fact that man cannot do that. If he follow his instincts merely, the life he lives is not human, nor is it animal: it is inhuman—a perversion and a ruin.

As truly native to man as hunger and sex is his deep-seated sense of right and wrong. This, too, demands its place, and strives for expression. Denied, it is as restive as an instinct that is denied. Repressed, it seeks other outlets as do the animal impulses. The modern study of dreams proves this. Just as natural instincts that have been denied seek their satisfaction in dream, as when a hungry man dreams that he is enjoying a good meal, so the moral side of our nature where it has been silenced by wrong habit or action, re-asserts itself in dream and seeks there the outlet denied in active waking hours. Fear of discovery, or fear of punishment, often shapes the dream-images of those who have thus outraged their true nature. Depression accompanies the sense of guilt; joy and peace come as the inner reward of well-doing, showing that our moral nature is as native and fundamental to us as our instincts.

The harmony of personality, therefore, can only be achieved as both the instinctive and the moral elements find their appropriate places in the organisation of a man's life. Moralists emphasize the drastic penalties that befall the character in which the moral and rational elements have been repressed. At the same time psychologists show that the man in whom the instinctive elements of

nature are unsatisfied, pays penalties equally drastic. The urge of the instinctive life has to be satisfied no less and no more than the austere demands of conscience and the clear discernings of reason. Man has to bring all his parts into a complete and co-operative unity, or he has not learned how to live.

§ 2. *The things that make for Harmony.*

For this task of bringing the elements of the personal life into a working cohesion, Nature gives us a great unifying impulse, which has been called the *law of completeness.*[1] Physiologically this is seen in the wonder of birth, in which the type reproduced is rarely abnormal and generally complete to the most minute details. Subsequent growth is just as sure as pre-natal development, it is all towards a complete human being. It is also seen in the co-operation of all our physical parts to restore to its normal condition any part that has been injured. Psychologically, the law of completion is seen in the push of instincts to find their expression, and when this is denied, in the impulses that emerge from the subconscious in disguised or tortuous ways. It is of the nature of Mind also to search for unity and to find its rest there, as the history of thought clearly shows. Every organism, says the psychologist, is impelled to develop towards its own completeness, and this is true not only of the physical organism but of the whole complicated organism of the human personality with all its instinctive desires and its insatiable spiritual longing. Not only does the "type" set the limits within which the human being develops, it exercises a positive control; it sets the direction and draws him on along a line of development by which he approximates to his "type." The human end is operative even in human beginnings. Though that end is only appreciated by the wise and the good, it is none the less a vital factor long before such conscious recognition. It impresses some quality of its own even upon man's instinctive actions.

[1] Cf. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals,* Ch. VIII.

Though instinctive action is action in pursuance of an end without conscious perception of the end, yet for the human being the end is human, the type is human. A child's affection is not the same as a dog's, it has its own distinctive quality corresponding to the human type. Thus the hope of perfection is not a dream of rare saints and poets. It is given in our common nature. It is grounded in the positive, structural and architectonic principles of human life.

In the abstract, then, it would seem that with the pressure of instincts from behind, instincts which are allied to the great, full ends of human life; with which Bosanquet calls the impulse towards "coherent adaptivity and progressiveness" to mould the type; and finally with the undoubted lure of goodness, truth and beauty as an ideal before him—it would seem that man should attain a great nobility of character and build up a complete and satisfying society.

§ 3. *The Actual Discord and its Cause.*

But he does not! So far from this, humanity knows only a troubled peace. Our social organisation is full of fears and feuds which from time to time break out in violence and warfare. What might be is so far removed from what is, both in the average personal life and in the common social life, that we are forced to look for the reason why and where men go wrong. With self-adjusting elements in our nature, which theoretically would seem to make it almost "fool-proof," the perfect self-adjustment is not given easily and may easily be missed. The natural and physical processes do not of themselves achieve it. It is not to be attained mechanically, unconsciously or without effort. It is effort involving choice that differentiates human progress from evolutionary progress—effort involving choice, thought, ideal, volition and action. This is the crucial factor in individual development. Our movement towards the perfect type depends on a certain positive initiative into which not only instinctive impulse, but

rather than arrested. Repressed instincts ("complexes"), failing their normal expression, are not passive but active. They produce inward conflict, the nature of which is not always known. They are the secret springs of irrational interests and impulsive action, the more irresistible that they are secret. The organised "self," which as will should move out on a deliberate course, is countered by the influence of an irrational bias or defied by the uprush of spontaneous and dominating impulse. Life is divided. Dr. Jekyll cohabits with Mr. Hyde. The soul is the battlefield on which the contest rages in different phases and forms, until some reintegration is given or a collapse comes; or, as in most cases, a man surrenders his nobler ideals, settles down henceforth to lower standards and is satisfied with some working compromise which has no promise for the future. It is the old story of degeneration, the issue of the unequal contest between the good that we would and do not, and the evil that we would not and yet do.

Degeneration is usually a slow process, and with it there is generally the attempt to hide it. To what miserable subterfuges will men resort that they may "keep up appearances!" How clever they may become in the art of deceit! Here is a great perversion of those energies that would normally carry a man far along the straight and honest road. And besides the vulgar hypocrisies there are subtle sophistries which make great demands upon the mind. Through phases of mental hesitation and indecision, which are due to the necessity of keeping in character and relating what should be said or done to the fictions which have been chosen, the mind itself becomes dishonest, the eye itself cannot see straight. Moreover, hypocrisy may be conscious or unconscious. Conscious hypocrisy involves deliberate choice of evil in order to escape something that is disliked. But there is a fatal facility in us all to argue for what we wish, to defend actions and standards rather than test them. Not yet is this the sin of hypocrisy, it is still unconscious; but it is

the subtle beginning of that process which holds the mind from truth and arrests moral development.

Sentimentalism is another phase of the perverted mind which shrinks from reality and will not face the truth of life. On the whole it is less conscious than hypocrisy, but it is due to a similar mental aberration and is no less disastrous to the normal development of life. As the mind finds its compensation in dreams for what it is denied in waking, so in other ways than the dreams of the night people are satisfied to realise themselves in a kind of dream-life rather than face the difficulties of realising themselves in conscious and moral purpose. Elaine sees life reflected in the mirror, but the mirror is at length shattered; the sentimentalist lives in his own self-woven phantasy, but Reality will at last break through. So of many of life's so-called romances! Childhood's world of fancy marches with youth's world of romance, and this should lead to the real world of actualities and responsibilities. When this has not been the case, how often has the sex-instinct fashioned a romance-world of its own and the game of "pretend" been played with terrific stakes. The dream which is given as a compensation for what has been denied, may become a phantasy-life and the substitute for life itself.

§ 6. *Regression.*

Regression is the word used by psychologists for the lapsing back of life into a stage that has been passed, as also for the collapse of the man's higher powers under the uncurbed onslaught of instinctive impulses. The phrase that used to be popular, "reversion to type," does not quite convey the final calamity that may befall a human character. It describes the loss of what cultivation has given to the plant, and domestication to the animal; but we have seen that these analogies between human and sub-human life do not go far enough. Mental science of recent years employs stronger terms. The "pervert" may still have some *modus vivendi,* but there is a stage at which

this may collapse under the constant pressure of life. The mask of the hypocrite is dislodged, the glasshouse of the sentimentalist is broken. But the breakdown is not merely due to the attack from without, it is due to the confusion and anarchy within the personality; "the house divided against itself cannot stand." It was suggested by Jesus that even the consistency of evil in "Satan" could not stand!

Regression in its complete manifestations has to be studied in the asylums, hospitals, and prisons. There we discover into what an abyss the broken mind will plunge. Our physical nature cannot for long stand the strain of anarchy within the mind, hence drunkenness, often the outcome of inward conflict. The nervous system cannot stand it, hence neurasthenia. Our mental nature cannot stand it, hence insanity. The emotional nature cannot stand it, hence hysteria. Society must protect itself from the man that runs amok, as in cases of sex-perversion, kleptomania, etc.

> O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! . . .
> Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh.

§ 7. *The universality of conflict.*

But cases of utter mental and moral collapse are comparatively few. From these morbid cases we turn to more normal failures. The same principles which find vivid illustration in extreme cases are seen also in ordinary average life. Man's failure in the pursuit of his noblest ideals is not usually seen in his avowed abandonment of them, but in some premature modification of their claim, and in some premature satisfaction. *Love,* for instance, which has within it the promise of the highest, is sometimes diverted and debased into a gross sex-passion, and the sacred things of body and soul may be exploited for an excitement, while love's greatest gifts are missed, its joys of the spirit and its refining of the soul remain unknown. By love man is led into co-operation with the Creator of life, learns the sacramental relation of body

and spirit, and realises that God allows man to share with Him His creative work. To those initiated into the secret of mutual self-giving, the inner light of Nature's beauty is revealed and felt to be the "expression" of Creative love and joy. When he misses the true way, how shameful are the ways man finds!

In the pursuit of other ideals, too, arrest has often proved equally calamitous. Divergence from the ways of *Righteousness* leads to a false righteousness which has alienated mankind from the true, more effectually than even wanton wickedness would have done—as when with law and letter its Pharisaic professors made it a burden grievous to be borne. And yet the way of Righteousness is the way in which the majesty of conscience and the sources of moral power are revealed. Half-hearted or resented *Obedience* produces a conception of life hedged in by restrictions. But obedience guided by conscience and insight leads to increasing spiritual knowledge and develops independence and strength for the service of God. *Truth* under our mishandling may appear as pedantry and prejudice which are the very negation of freedom, yet truth is the chief minister of freedom whereby the growing mind is led beyond the systems that Time makes uncouth into an ever-expanding universe. *Honour,* often clamped into class-loyalties which strangle independence and initiative and foster bitter feuds, is the instinctive joy of being trusted and the eager uprising of the spirit of youth at the touch of responsibility. *Fellowship* contracts into cliques, whereas it should be for the inclusion of every man and the humanising of all relations, and *Virtue* may wear the proud air of conventional propriety and never know its great alliances in God and man, so that if she

> Feeble were
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Such are some of the distortions of the very ideals of life, whereby men are led into false ways of thought and conduct which are wholly ruinous.

III

Man and His Environment

§ 8. *Man's place and powers.*

But now we must remember that this harmony must be achieved in the environment in which the individual is set, and must therefore be considered in relation to it. A man's environment includes the great background of the world of Nature, and the agelong evolution of the race, as well as the inheritance from his more immediate ancestry and the influences of country, home and society. Human life has its place in this great setting and is a part of it. We often speak of environment as the system against which we have to struggle, but long before the struggle commences it is our environment which has fed and fostered and preserved us; and even when the struggle is proceeding, the world against which we are struggling is sustaining us. The primary relation of man to his environment is not one of hostility, it is one of dependence and helpfulness. Man's side is made possible by his environment, not only on the physical side, but on the mental and spiritual side also. His development is the story of his particular behaviour under the pressure of his world, his use of its gifts, his obedience to its laws, his reactions to its stimulus, his response to its demands. His life is a succession of awakenings to what is being disclosed to him. His nature unfolds under the promptings and prohibitions of his surroundings. His desires are most acute when already the satisfactions are drawing near.

This being granted, it remains that the important thing in man is that his responses to his environment are not altogether involuntary, as they are in plant and animal life. Many of them are involuntary, but the specific thing in human nature lies in those that are not, in those that are self-determined. We need to beware of analogies from evolution when we are describing man's development.

Natural growth is by involuntary acceptance of the conditions, *e.g.*, the growth of the lily is by an effortless unfolding of its nature under the influence of climate and soil. But in the growth of a human being and in the full development of personality other factors enter, viz., understanding and effort. Although his environment is not hostile to man still it sets his task and presents a challenge. Only as he accepts the task and comes to understand does Nature yield her secrets, and with them her forces for man's disposal. By understanding and effort is all scientific progress. Only as the prophet sees the truer order, lives in it and proclaims it, does his world of vision overcome the world of confusion. Only as man understands the nature of his instincts and tries to control and direct them by means of reason and conscience, does he find that body now helps soul as soul helps body. This is the difference between natural development and human, human development is by self-conscious effort and decision and purpose. To consider the lilies of the field will teach us the great lessons of trust. But Jesus does not teach that that is the whole response of man to life. Such trust is the essential ground of the good life, but Jesus concludes this part of His teaching with a word that suggests conscious aim and self-determined effort—"Seek ye first the kingdom."

§ 9. *The possibility of sublimation.*

Keeping to the personal problem of life as men have to meet it, for many people it is just their misfit with their environment that makes their task so difficult. The in a crudely realistic sense may lead to a concentration most obvious cases are those whose circumstances do not allow the normal expression and satisfaction of the natural are closely confined in offices and factories. For such as these, life must be filled with the sense of frustration, unless their natural instinct find some legitimate mode of expression other than the direct and primitive ones. This is the problem of sublimation which indeed has to be

solved by every one to some extent, but is particularly oppressive in certain cases only too frequent. The sedentary worker finds outlet for the energy which his daily work does not absorb by interest in sport. The unmarried woman finds the sex-instinct mature into the maternal instinct through the love of "other people's children," in such professions as those of nursing and teaching, or by occupation in creative artistic work. People whose natural aptitude and endowment are debarred by their circumstances have a very difficult passage of life to negotiate, and there is no doubt that many lives fall short of their possibility, or even come to disaster at this point. Sublimation is not an easy process. But it is well for those who feel that they are misfits in life, and for those who feel that life is depriving them of the sphere for which they are endowed, to know that they are not condemned to lifelong disappointment and conflict. Many people have learned so well the art of living that they have found complete satisfaction in spite of all the frustrations and denials arising from their circumstances. Sublimation is not perfect unless vital energy, thwarted in one direction, issues in pursuits that utterly satisfy the person's ideal of life, are interesting and pleasurable, and also of value to the community. In the lives of the saints many an instance of the perfectly sublimated life is to be found.

§ 10. *Man's true environment.*

But not by any mere adaptation to his immediate environment does man find peace. The "rest," which Goethe said was to be found by "fitting oneself to his sphere" is no more than a temporary rest. Entire adaptation to present and immediate surroundings leaves something still to be desired by the ardent spirit of man. Something within him rejects such satisfaction and urges him further. His interior harmony must be achieved in relation to the eternal order of truth and love. It must be keyed with the eternal realities. It must be in harmony

with the universe of God. Nothing "works" even in this world that is not related to the ultimate values of God's world. A man may live in easy and unrestrained association with his immediate environment, co-operating in happy action and reaction with the society in which he lives; as a law-abiding citizen the fashion of his thought and his standards of action may meet and satisfy the demands of his place and time, but in this is no assurance of his peace. The problem of living demands for its solution something more than "a mere frictionless participation in the momentary conditions of immediate environment. It must include an observance of laws far more universal in their application than purely local and temporary conditions." [1] Conventional morality at its best is the morality of the average man. The demands of the law may not exceed the sanction of the average moral level of a majority. A whole nation of law-abiding citizens may be held in a vast delusion. It is not true that you can never indict a nation. History presents many such indictments, as when a nation plunges into war or an empire crumbles to moral decay. So that, if the harmony a man is achieving within himself is keyed to nothing more absolute than the social or national convention, there is no assurance that it will not be broken up. At any moment something he has forgotten may crash in and reduce his life to discord and chaos. Man has to do with God's realities. His problem of life, therefore, is to achieve an inner harmony which is also in inviolable correspondence with God and His Kingdom.

IV

The Centre of Man's Failure

§ 11. *The source of man's failure.*

From our failure to achieve these ends we look back into the self and try to discern the initiating causes there.

[1] Cf. Jung, *Psychological Types*, p. 419.

By some error we miss the way; but whether our error be through ignorance which would exonerate us from blame, or the error for which we are more responsible, we have to pay the price in the consequences that ensue. By an error in judgment the merchant may fail to meet the demands of the market, and this error have consequences in the man's commercial ruin. So by wrong-doing a man may fail to meet the moral demand of life and there will be the inevitable moral consequences. By moral error, he cuts himself off from the moral relations of life and fails to have commerce in the things which will enrich his character and enlarge his understanding. Thus in moral error or sin we "miss the mark" and bungle the whole business of life. It is our failure to find and fit into our place in the scheme of real things, and the fault lies not in outward things but in ourselves. It is we who are wrong, our inner organism is impaired, our life is not functioning. Sin is a miscarriage in the process of living, and it is due to the perversion of some element in us that is meant to be used quite otherwise. It results in the caricature of manhood, it puts us out of the order of Truth, Goodness and Love, which is the real Universe, God's universe. Viewed in relation to the question "how to live," sin is how not to live. It works out to a miscarriage of life, and that is death.

Error in judgment may issue in consequences which are serious enough; yet it does not fill us with the sense of moral shame. Error may make us ashamed, but the shame will not be of the deepest if in it there is nothing of the sense of guilt; for such a sense of guilt is not eased by the admission of ameliorating circumstances, or the excuse of "mine infirmity," or of inherited bias. We feel that *we* were responsible, not our nature merely, but *we*. We are not able to get behind the direct indictment of conscience and the sense that we are chargeable for the guilt of sin, and responsible for its evil consequences in the lives of others. Though we say that instincts may issue in action before they are censored; though we push

the inquiry back and admit that there is an innate bias towards evil before conscience or reason intervenes, "a quasi-instinctive movement of desire towards evil things before the will has opportunity to speak," which the theologians call "concupiscence," [1] still this does not silence the inward protest or free us from the sense of blame. We may leave it with the admission that the origin of sin seems to reach down to an irreducible surd in human nature, and this may ease the mind that tries to understand, but it does not ease the sinner of his sense of sin. His cry is always "I have sinned. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

We should not have this sense of guilt did we not feel that we were free to have done differently; so that when we are pressed to answer the question "What is the root of sin?" we have to answer that sin appears to take its origin in a certain reluctance to submit instinct and desire to the discipline of conscience. In conscience we have a protest, ordinarily a negative protest, the moment our desires are leading off the line of the true end and purpose of life. True self-development is to be found in obedience to these protests, but self-will prefers indiscriminate surrender to impulse. Thus, instead of holding up our impulses to be examined by conscience, so as to see life steadily and see it whole, and in this light to control and regulate them, we allow these impulses, of themselves and without reference to the real end of man, to pull us hither and thither, as appetite and circumstances stimulate one or other of them.

§ 12. *The mystery of sin.*

The fashioning of character is only by constant acceptance of the restraints of conscience and the constraints of the ideal. Character has to be created out of the non-moral material of nature, "by subjecting the seething tumultuous life of natural tendency, of appetite and

[1] R. Mackintosh, *Christianity and Sin,* p. 171.

passion, affection and desire" [1] to the moulding influence of reflective purpose. The source of universal sinfulness is simply the general failure to affect on all occasions the moralisation of inevitable impulses, and to choose the higher aims rather than those of lower value in spite of their clamorous appeal.[2]

The possibility is that the initial disloyalty, the first act of rebellion, is insincerely excused and masked so that we deceive ourselves when we sin, finding some specious reason for doing so. Some psychologists are inclined to say that such deception is by a quite unconscious process, even in the very first instance. If this be so, then at no point is there a conscious act of sin, either in thought or deed, and the conclusion is our total irresponsibility for sin. We are quite aware that man can get himself into a moral and mental condition in which wrong acts are done without any sense of guilt because the excuses are so thoroughly ingrained and whole-heartedly believed in; probably also at a certain stage unconscious forces erect mask after mask without conscious insincerity. We may accept, too, the theory that no sinful act ever occurs without a prior step of self-deception. But we deny that the masking was at its initial stage entirely unconscious; or if this is too categorical a statement about so great a mystery, we may say without doubt that we soon get some suspicion that we were wrong. The moment that happens we are faced with responsibility for our action. The point is that the universal consciousness of guilt requires us to put responsibility somewhere, and if we may not put it in the act, we must put it in the self-deception. The primary temptation lies in our reluctance to prune and regulate desire in the interest of the ideal man. The demands of life and duty and fellowship conflict with the immediate good we apprehend for ourselves. Life's claims appear to threaten our immediate satisfactions,

[1] Seth, *Principles of Ethics.*
[2] Tennant, *Origin of Sin,* p. 109.

and instead of the brave and humble attempt to meet these claims, we seek to impose ourselves upon life and wrest it to our own purposes. Instead of entering into the great human pact of living together and moving on to the great human end, we would lord it over others and exploit them to our own uses. Against the protests of conscience we take refuge in the excuse, the compromise, and the lie, and are betrayed into the illusion under the mask of which we sin.

But origins keep their secret well and personality is a deep abyss. All things go out into mystery. It is a recognised fallacy that the explanation of anything is to be found in the discovery of its origin. Whether it be man or institutions, or words, something more is needed than their derivations if these are to be understood. The nature of the thing is better understood in the light of the end than in the mystery of its beginnings. "By their fruits shall ye know them." And just as our most fruitful study of man is through the highest manifestations of his spirit rather than through his primitive condition of savagery, so our study of sin will yield more satisfactory results when it is pursued in the mature mind and in its outworkings in social life than when confined to the mysterious region of its origin. When life comes out in the open, we can see without doubt that conscious life is made up of an infinite number of choices, and admitting that these may be partially determined, we are clearly conscious of the possibility of selection as between higher and lower, right and wrong, of the protesting voice of conscience, of the soul-stirring appeal of sacrifice and the assent of the whole self to that which is good.

We come back then to the fact that our bungling of life is due to some damage to our inner nature which is at the same time a betrayal of our duty to our fellow-men. The outworkings are wrong because the in-workings are wrong, and while much of the psychological interest of to-day concentrates on the interior mechanism, no man can afford to take his eye off the moral fact, the witness

of conscience that what is wrong ought not to be, that "to him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Kant's acid test as to what was right or wrong was to universalise it, and imagine the result if everybody did it. We may adapt his dictum and apply it to the unity after which man strives, and say that anything, however apparently good, or argued to be good, that does not lead to fuller unity in ourselves and with our universe, is wrong. If the moral nature is impaired, if it does not exercise an increasing sway, if it is not reinforced by the faith by which the realities of the spirit become the controlling forces of his life, if it does not tend to a conscious recognition of God, man will never reach the true goal of life. It is in moral action that we are most consciously in tune with God and His universe, and discover the deepest values and satisfactions of life. Dislocation from that relation means arrest, or the arrival at the dead-end of life.

V

The Entrenchment of Evil in Illusion

§ 13. *Illusory "fixed ideas."*

In personal life we are constantly seeing how *dominant ideas,* developing without any conscious relation with God and the whole of life, create illusions which tend to become permanent. By nature the dominant idea generally draws its energy from some primary instinct like sex, pugnacity, acquisitiveness, or self-display, or from some combination of them. It blinds the eye to all other interests and issues. It closes the circle of life's purpose prematurely and achieves a limited unity. Along this line we see the mental process by which man fashions the idols of his soul, and realise that idolatry is not an ancient practice outgrown, but a tendency that is for ever to be fought. The ancient gods of Paganism and the false gods of to-day are the same. They are the deification of instincts that have

come to dominate the mind. They are religions in which men feel themselves allied with the powers that be. They produce in their devotees enthusiasms and ecstasies in the literal sense of those words. They lift them out of depression and fill them with momentary courage and happiness. When we speak of modern idolatry we are hardly speaking in metaphor. Lust, War, Drink, and "Greed of Gold" are rooted in deep-seated human instincts that have not been subdued to their right and proportional place in human life. They have usurped the place of the whole. They are sectional gods created by a sectional mind, rival gods corresponding to rival instincts, as one God corresponds with the unity of personality. The passion of the old prophets for the one God was their protest against the anarchy they saw in the lives of men around them, and their witness to the unity they had achieved in themselves.

Even though the dominant idea does not project itself in such recognisable images as these, it expresses the same masterful control of life. It brings everything into subservience to itself. Through it human egoism defends itself with a wonderful versatility, weaving its sophistries not out of evil, but out of that which is just and reasonable and virtuous. It wrests reason to its own ends. It casts its lure across the whole mind, till conscience is stilled and taste vitiated, morality perverted and the whole personality is deluded and self-deceived. This is what Plato called the "lie in the soul," which as Jowett says is "the involuntary ignorance which is worse than the voluntary, the deception of the highest part of the soul from which he who is deceived has now no power of delivering himself. It is the greatest unconsciousness of the greatest untruth" (Jowett's *Republic of Plato,* XXXIX). In the language of the Gospels it is the light within that becomes active and positive darkness, it is "the sin against the Holy Spirit." And this is what we mean when we say that sin is the dislocation of the inner powers by which we deal with life and the resultant

bungling of the whole business of living. It is a failure to find and fit into our place in God's scheme of things, and an attempt to wrest life to our own ego-centric desires.

§ 14. *Collective illusions.*

But while the sins of the flesh and directly anti-social sins rapidly disintegrate personality and ruin society, there are also sins of the spirit which become entangled with ideas of a higher order, and so obtain a moral or even a religious sanction. The Pharisaism which blocked the way of Jesus, and at last encompassed His death, was such a system. The Pharisees, though a religious class, free from gross immoralities and full of zeal for the Sacred Law of their nation and the worship of the one true God, nevertheless presented a complete and unyielding antithesis to the spirit and way of Christ. The temporary strength and the ultimate weakness of the system had two sources; it was rooted in egoistic pride which its representatives disguised from themselves by essential hypocrisy, and also it was closed against any higher righteousness than that which its code presented, against all ideals other than those traditionally accepted. It was a case of arrested development. It is the great historic illustration of religious illusion. Like a cancerous growth, the system absorbed the vital powers of religion and with them built up malignant cell-formations. Hence the moral feud between Jesus Christ and Pharisaism! Side by side with Pharisaism at this time was Sadduceeism which was even more openly worldly, material and utilitarian in its dominant ideas. It was embodied in a limited aristocracy of priests who administered the Temple, and converted into a brigands' cave—a rendezvous of outlaws from God's kingdom—what should have been the stronghold of the Kingdom of God. The woes that Jesus foretold for Judaism as dominated by leaders of these two types, came about as an historic fact in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

§ 15. *Some modern illustrations.*

But before recounting this epic struggle of the world-decisive conflict between Jesus the Christ, the true fulfilment of the Divine idea, and the illusory ideas that dominated the soul of Israel as a nation, we must remind ourselves of the universal meaning of the issues involved. Recent history affords us terrific illustrations of this. Last century the Darwinian hypothesis, extended far beyond the bounds of Darwin's intention to a complete philosophy of life, became a great common illusion. Applied with sweeping generalisation to human life, society and nations, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest became the justification of many a selfish ambition, the sanction of unjust means to successful ends, and gave to the strong the top place in the evolutionary series. In the mind of many people it replaced the idea of the moral law by what seemed to be a greater law, viz., the law of life. The fact that it was a law was the junction-point over which a generation that had respected morality and religion, ran into a view of life and conduct in which natural law was primary, and moral or spiritual law was secondary. "More and more as the formulæ of evolution became popular and gathered about them the loose and unscientific accretions that belong to the language of a half-educated society, they spread the belief that for "science" progress was the child of strife, and therefore of self-assertion, hardness and moral anarchy." [1] The parallel development on the Continent was when the Kantian "will to good" as the register of ultimate Reality, was replaced by Nietzsche's "will to power." This was the great illusion of the last fifty years. It was the sin of the world, its dominant idea, the ganglion of great obsessive instincts which produced a "construction," a civilisation, a *Kultur* of its own, but one that was alien to the Divine order and could not be reconciled with God's purpose. The result was War. It may be that to-day we are witnessing the weaving of another great

[1] L. T. Hobhouse, *The World in Conflict*, p. 36.

social illusion gathering round a dominant idea which is mainly Marxian.

§ 16. *Redemption from collective illusions a supreme necessity.*

Society and its institutional life being the immediate environment of men's individual lives, it is manifest that individual failure must be largely conditioned by the collective illusions of society. The psychological power of such suggestion is enormous; and in nothing was Jesus Christ's unique mastery of life as the Holy One of God in all relations, more unique than in the way in which He rose above the evil influences and limitations of His spiritual environment. In order that other men might be enabled to partake in a like spirit of life to His own, it was needful not only that He should be immune in His own private experience, or even His own example of life, but that He should so challenge and destroy the prestige of the dominant illusions pervading the Jewish people at the time, that the spiritual order would be redeemed from its enslaving and disabling elements. This is why such strong relief is given in the next chapter on "The Historic Jesus" to the more public and national aspects of Christ's personality and ministry, as the inaugurator of the true Kingdom of God on earth, in full power of His own person as God's Vicegerent, and in principle for man everywhere and in all time.

§ 17. *Retrospect and prospect.*

The danger in presenting a summary of human life lies not merely in what may be overlooked, but in what may be unduly emphasised. The desire to "face the facts" instincts, *e.g.*, unmarried women, and workers whose lives upon one phase of life to the exclusion of other sides which are related to it. Literary realism shows many illustrations of this. Human weakness studied in a vacuum produces a realism that is as artificial as it is ghastly, and the study of man's mishandling of life may

be equally false if we forget that all man's errors and even sins can be made subservient to the final end of Good in the process of the making of man. It is Man in the making with whom we are concerned, and God is his Maker, the mysterious and adorable God, who not only manifests Himself in the True, the Beautiful and the Good, but allows His power and will to be imprisoned, as it were, for awhile in things that are relatively ugly and evil that He may redeem and sanctify them. It was faith in God and man's destiny that gave to Jesus His view of human life, His invincible hope, His death-defying love. To Him the universe was essentially pervaded with the character of the Creator, in spite of the existence and power of evil. To Him man was worth living for and worth dying for. To Him man's final triumph, or rather God's triumph in man, was assured—though it might not be achieved without strain and conflict, dust and heat, and even temporary disaster and defeat. As with infinite mercy He regarded man's moral struggle, so our attitude must be one of infinite pity and patience and humility and faith, surely believing that it is God's purpose to save us from failure and lead our feet into the way of Peace.

PART II
CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER III
THE HISTORIC JESUS

A. T. Cadoux

SYNOPSIS

I. The Conditions.

(1) *Jesus as man triumphant* under essentially human conditions. (2) *His historic circumstances.* The world's unification under Rome had devitalised its religion except in Israel, with whose unique religion went a dangerous resentment of Roman rule. (3) *Jesus, John, and the Messiahship.* Jesus knows that He is the "Greater One" of the Baptist's prophecy. The forces He must reckon with. The nationalist Messianism. To Jesus the Christ is rather "the Servant of the Lord" and "Son of man." (4) *The experience of opposition.* His work in Galilee stopped by the authorities. "The Son of man must suffer."

II. The Man.

(5) *Jesus the Master of personal living.* His complete and dynamic unification of life's conflicting elements: not without struggle, nor without a controlling idea and ruling passion. With Jesus, man's goodness is response to God's goodness. Therefore in Jesus we see God. (6) Hence, too, *His escape from self-glory,* His recognition of the Divine purpose in the Universe. (7) *His religious attitude to men.* He saw that what God is to man depends upon what man is to his fellows. Hence His invasive and creative power with men. (8) *His personal insight.* He surmounted conventional distinctions by penetrating to the fundamentally human. (9) *His intense sympathy.* Painted by the sin of others, He would not shield Himself by limiting love or blunting moral sensitiveness. Hence His power to save from sin.

III. The Issue.

(10) *Jesus appealed to His nation to fulfil its God-given destiny.* "The light of the Gentiles" must love its enemies. (11) Opposing the current of *Jewish nationalism* Jesus was crucified. But from this conflict with Jewish national religion He created the one truly universal religion. (12) *The means He employed,* compelling the religious authorities either to accept an obvious reform at His hands or to kill Him, and thus, in either case, destroy their influence. (13) *The immediate outcome.* The death for which He was prepared should have brought home to the people the urgency of God's love. But their defection and Judas' treachery made clear to Jesus that, so far as the vast majority of them was concerned, this was not to be. Hence the agony of Gethsemane. Israel chose the path to war with Rome, and God's Kingdom on earth was postponed. (14) *The Hope that remained.* The relation to His sorrow of His hope for the Church. (15) *Triumph in failure.* Failure the surest revealer of the heart. Jesus' experience as the final revelation and power of God. The Resurrection of Jesus. His triumph in life and death. (16) Justification of the historical and psychological approach.

Appendices by Dr. J. Vernon Bartlet.

No. 1. Note on Daniel vii. and "the Son of Man."
No. 2. Note on the Voice at the Baptism.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORIC JESUS

I

The Conditions

§ 1. *Jesus, Triumphant.*

Peter spoke for the heart of humanity when he hailed Jesus as the Christ, God's King of men. The immediate impression of His story is that of triumph won in the very situations in which humanity commonly has to confess defeat. And even those experiences of His life that look most like defeat reveal themselves, when we get at their heart, as the most signal of His triumphs.

"When we speak of Jesus as triumphing in the various situations of life, we presuppose that He had to face the moral and other difficulties that beset the path of all men. Otherwise our words are meaningless. He had to meet life's common problem—how to live the sort of life He wanted to live." Whatever were the birth-gifts of Jesus, there is not the slightest reason to think that it was easier for Him to be good than for us. The temptation in the wilderness and the bloody sweat of Gethsemane show what it cost Jesus to know and to do God's will. "In so far as His sort of life was far higher than ours, His problem was far more challenging and acute. Even when His sense of unique vocation had become clear to Himself, He had still to relate the ideal purpose of life as He divined it to the particular environment in which He lived. He had to discern the will of God as to 'the next

Note.—Sentences introduced in quotation marks, without specifying their source, come from a preliminary memorandum by G. E. Darlaston.

thing.'" The choice between right and wrong, between the good and the less good, was as real in its peril and pain to Him as to us. "It is when we thus look at Jesus on a human footing and compare His handling of life with our own, that we begin to recognise His mastery in the things which are human nature's daily concern, and to read there His warrant to be the Lord of Life."

We must be careful lest our theology, by treating His personality in the abstract, should make the Christ of our faith and worship unreal. For in the attempt to sum up our total impression of Jesus in a theory of His person we tend to look upon His life in an absolute light, whereas the test and revelation of goodness is always the concrete historical situation, with all its local and temporal difficulties and incongruities. And when we remember that the work of Jesus in effect was to make a national religion universal, we are warned all the more against any attempt in His case to separate the eternal from the temporal and local. The approach of our thought to Him must therefore be through a brief historical review.

§ 2. *His historic circumstances.*

A survey of His psychological environment shows that He came "in the fulness of the times," at the crucial moment of human history, and stands for ever at the supreme crisis of the world's religious development. In His day the political unification of the world under the Roman rule had devitalised the religion of all the nations which it had absorbed, yet could not supply the universal religion for which it had itself created the need.[1]

[1] "The Roman world has been described as decaying for lack of God and social morality. The old gods no longer commanded belief, and the old moral standards no longer secured respect. The Hellenistic age had discovered the individual and crowned the adventurer. Many consciously sought and all really needed a religion and an ethic at once universal and personal. Not a few devout persons from among the Gentiles were drawn to Judaism, attracted by its monotheism and its moral discipline, but repelled by many seemingly barbarous customs and crude ideas embedded in it."—H. G. Wood.

Israel, partly by its central situation amid the countries round the Eastern Mediterranean, and yet more by its native religious genius, had been since the Babylonian captivity the home of the highest religion and ethic in the world. Of this superiority it grew ever more conscious; and the period of contact, during which much was absorbed from surrounding peoples, was followed by one of segregation and increasing exclusiveness under the influence of religious and ethical interest of unparalleled intensity. But the conditions of racial contact that had been largely instrumental in Israel's religious development produced also almost incessant warfare; and Israel's growing consciousness of religious and ethical superiority was wounded by its subjugation to one conqueror after another. The stronger the rule to which the Jews were subjected, the more powerful the ferment of their revolting spirits; so that the early years of the Roman Empire found them the most turbulent of its subjects.[1] The tremendous forces of patriotism, religion, fanaticism, pride and indignation, were at work; but they had no outlet, for the people were leaderless.

At length what seemed the long silence of God was broken by one in whom they recognised a prophet. John was too great to ingratiate himself with Israel by denouncing Rome, and like the greatest prophets he made light of nationalistic boasts; like them, too, he was sure that the key to history was in Israel's divinely purposed destiny, and he called for repentance from all that was unworthy of God's chosen people. But there his mandate ended. He could make his fellow-countrymen feel that they must turn from their old ways of life or be doomed; but what should now fill their hearts, and be the driving force of

[1] "Incorporation in the Empire threatened Judaism with the same devitalising influences which had undermined the faith of other peoples. At all costs, the Jews felt they must preserve intact the faith of their fathers. And was it an idle hope that they might measure swords successfully with Rome? The vigorous thriving nucleus of the nation in Palestine would be supported by the scattered groups of the Dispersion. A second Judas Maccabæus might work a greater deliverance."—H. G. Wood.

their lives, he knew not. He looked for a Greater who should come after him, to baptize with purging fire and with the empowering Spirit.

§ 3. *Jesus, John, and the Messiahship.*

It was probably as He listened to John that Jesus became aware that He had within Himself that to which John pointed as yet to be given of God through another—such a knowledge of God as would fill the swept and garnished heart with divine enthusiasm for God's will, and would thus complete the forecast by changing its note from the possibility of doom to that of a still greater opportunity. The hour that to John was dark with doom, to Jesus was trembling upon the dawn of "the Kingdom of God." But if the preaching of John made Jesus thus fully conscious of His unique knowledge of God, it thrust upon Him the greatest task man has ever borne or will ever bear. The implications and temptations of this experience were fought out in the wilderness. They turned significantly upon three interests: that by which man lives, the Temple at Jerusalem, and all the nations of the world.

To understand the nature of Jesus' task we must glance at the forces at work in His race. At Israel's head was a small knot of priestly politicians, wealthy temporisers, who held place and power under Rome and wished to avoid any disturbance that might move Rome to action. Their opposites were the Zealots, who wanted open war with Rome, and believed that God would crown the attempt with success. The numerous and popular Pharisees shared the nationalism of the Zealots, but not their confidence in arms: rather let the nation keep the Law, their "Covenant" with God, and He Himself would enthrone them above all the nations of the world. The great mass of the people—all religious, many pious—were aggrieved at Rome and ready to rise at any commanding call. The times were alive with expectancy. God

would surely vindicate His elect and establish His kingdom, in which Israel's world-wide reign should be inaugurated by God's Anointed, His Messiah or Christ, a God-given King, a true son of David, reviving, increasing, and perpetuating the glories of their greatest time. With this expectancy Jesus had to reckon. He had to capture it or miss the key to His people's heart. He had to transform its spirit and change the direction of its terribly explosive power.

And his people's Scriptures, read in the light of His own personal experience of God and His ways, suggested to Him another interpretation of their destiny. Its greatest prophets had not been satisfied to think of Israel as a more righteous and permanently successful Assyria. To the great anonymous prophet of the Captivity, the Temple was to become "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. lvi. 7). In a notable series of passages (Isa. xlii. 1-9; xlix. 1-12; l. 4-10; lii. 13-15; liii.) he shows "the Servant of the Lord" as endowed with the divine Spirit "to carry true religion to the nations" (Moffatt's translation), as being "the light of the nations," and as discovering to the minds of men by His life and fate the divine royalty of service, and the divinely redemptive power of suffering and death borne in the cause of righteousness and love.[1] Daniel vii., also, contributed much to the thought and teaching of Jesus; but He saw it in another light than the popular one, and took it in His own sense, which was, in fact, far nearer to the one originally intended by its writer, especially in its emphasis upon the suffering through which the Kingdom was to be entered (vv. 21-27).[2] For the rest, these visions and interpretations show God bestowing upon His saints an eternal kingdom over all peoples and nations. The saints are symbolised by "one like unto a son of man," who

[1] References to the words of this prophet may be found in Mark i. 11 (*vide infra*); Matt. xi. 5 (Luke vii. 22); Luke iv. 18; xxii. 37.

[2] See appended Note A, p. 84.

"came with the clouds of heaven" in contrast with the four beasts that "came up from the sea" and symbolised the Gentile empires, indicating that the kingdom of the saints over the nations of the world was to be the antithesis of any kingdom of brute force. This is the Scripture's most explicit prophecy of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and it afforded material for correcting the common expectation, especially by superseding the nationalistic "Son of David" of popular messianism by the universal "Son of man" (cf. Mark xii. 35 ff.; xiv. 62).

The voice that Jesus heard at baptism, "Thou art my Son, my beloved one, in thee I am well pleased," probably marks Jesus' acceptance of the Messiahship. These words are usually taken as combining the common Jewish idea of God's Anointed "Son," [1] with that of "The Servant of the Lord." If, further, we read the "Servant of the Lord" passages into the visions of Dan. vii., and so define the nature of the saints' relation to the Gentiles, translating rule into service, and finding the secret of power in suffering; and if we look on the result as giving its true and final content to the term "Messiah," we seem to find the points at which the greatest utterances of Hebrew Scripture met and fructified in the mind of Jesus.

When John was imprisoned, Jesus began to proclaim the better and Divine possibilities of that dangerous season when "The Kingdom of God" was "nigh"—just ready to break in—if only Israel was truly ready for it in heart. John had not denounced or cursed the foreign "enemy." Jesus taught that if the Jews were to be real sons of God, they must love their enemies of all sorts, for such was God's love. The ultimate form of Jesus' own hope for His people is nowhere explicitly stated; but there can be little doubt that He would have had Israel reign in the world as He Himself was seeking to

[1] For an alternative interpretation, see appended Note B, p. 85.

reign in Israel, by utterly devoted service in imparting to them the truth of God.[1]

§ 4. *The experience of opposition.*

From the first there was much success amongst the people, and, almost from the first, criticism by the religious authorities, a criticism which turned upon points directly connected with the more nationalistic elements of Jewish religion, the Sabbath, ceremonial cleanness, behavior towards publicans and other outcasts; and this speedily hardened into determined opposition. Before long, for reasons not clearly given but evidently connected with this opposition, Jesus found He could no longer work openly in Galilee. It was not that the people had rejected Him. He upbraids certain cities "because they repented not," but in the cities the hold of the authorities was strongest; and with His upbraiding went the expression of His joy in the following of the simple, "I think thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes."

And now came a pause, occupied by a journey to Gentile territory, and comparable to His sojourn in the

[1] It should be stated here that the above interpretation of Jesus' idea of the Kingdom of God would, by many scholars, be considered inadequate. They would lay more stress upon other elements, especially the "Eschatological" or catastrophic. This is how Mr. H. G. Wood regards the matter: "That Jesus expected the New Age to come suddenly and to come soon, seems to be the true element in recent Apocalyptic and eschatological interpretation of His life and teaching. The extent to which He used Apocalyptic imagery, and the meaning He attached to it, are more doubtful. Mr. Middleton Murry seems to relate correctly the personal and the Apocalyptic elements in the teaching of Jesus when he writes: 'Men were to become sons of God: if they would become sons of God, they and all things would be changed. Not gently changed, in the sense that bad men would become good, but radically, catastrophically changed. A new kind of life, a new order of consciousness would begin, as different from that which men now have, as human life and human consciousness is different from animal life and animal consciousness. Between these there is an abyss. Such an abyss mankind would have leaped when they became sons of God.'—*The Life of Jesus*, p. 70."

desert. The outcome is twofold. The situation must have made the disciples ask themselves, Who is this, to stand against authorities even from Jerusalem? Jesus, too, was compelled to broach the issue as to His Personality. The reply was a confirmation of His own consciousness in the highest terms a Jew could use, "Thou art the Christ." And from this time Jesus taught them that "the Son of man" must suffer and be killed and "rise again." The disciples did not understand what He meant: but, when, looking back, they remembered that this teaching was followed by the journey to Jerusalem and His crucifixion and resurrection, they concluded that this was His meaning. Yet at the time they were not prepared for His death at the hands of the authorities at Jerusalem, and they did not expect His resurrection.

In considering what is reported of these predictions, we have to take into account the tendency of the early Church, influenced by Jewish ideas of Providence, to regard the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus as foreordained and as part of His own accepted plan all along. But the belief that Jesus foresaw clearly and surely all that was to happen to Him at Jerusalem, is difficult to hold; nor is it necessary. His fate depended upon certain human choices. It is not easy to think that He made the claims implied in His entry to Jerusalem and in the cleansing of the Temple, unless He thought that their appeal might meet with the people's understanding and acceptance. On the other hand, He knew that the prophet who challenged the crafty and ruthless hierarchy must count, not so much upon death or victory, as upon victory through death. Exactly what the outcome would be was uncertain; and in this respect, too, we must think that He lived under like human conditions with us, an essential part of which is the uncertainty of the future. Very probably, therefore, His prediction was in the simpler form preserved in Mark ix. 31, "The Son of man is being delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall

kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again," rather than in the more detailed forms given elsewhere.[1]

Jesus was from the first willing to spend and be spent utterly for His work. If God's people repented and received His truth, it was still through danger and suffering that He would have to lead them to their destiny. But it soon became clear that official Judaism, with its headquarters in Jerusalem, was the centre of an opposition with which He must come to issue. The full import of these considerations will appear later; but they are necessary for any adequate sense of the private and public conditions under which Jesus lived and worked, and therefore for any true appreciation of His personality and its triumph. He passed from the privacy of Nazareth into an arena of public activity, where the fanaticism of His day was ready either to accept Him on its own terms, and use Him for its own ends, or to combine with national pride and vested interest in a campaign to misrepresent, frustrate and destroy Him.

II

The Man

Jesus' death cannot be understood without further considering Him as the supreme achievement of personal life. We find in Him not only the crowning triumph in life's art, bringing the little events and distractions of daily human contacts and calls, as well as life's more intractable elements, into a harmonious whole; not only the

[1] *I.e.,* Mark viii. 31 and x. 33, 34, with their parallels in Matthew and Luke. Still simpler forms appear in Mark ix. 12 and Luke ix. 44, the latter apparently from an independent Lucan tradition. For the contention that the reference to "rising again" was for Jesus Himself an echo of Hosea vi. 2, if taken in the metaphorical sense there intended, see the careful examination of Christ's prediction of His resurrection as for Him the same as His future return (parousia) in power by W. S. Bradley, summarised in an appended Note to Mark viii. 31, in The Century Bible.

accomplishment of a heroic task against unimaginable odds; but an unyielding fidelity that defeats failure itself.

§ 5. *Jesus, the Master of Life.*

As the previous essays have set forth, the chief problem of our personality is to bring into unity the instincts and tendencies that fight for precedence within us. We recognise our own failure here and its harvest of futility, sin and tragedy; and as surely do we recognise the wholeness of Jesus. An inward coherence and unity give His life its unexampled beauty and strength.

One feature of this is the characteristic entireness of His reactions. Henry James makes one of his characters say to another, "When you are in a difficulty judge for yourself. Only let it then be all of you." That is precisely our difficulty. But with Jesus it seems as though at every touch or call of life His whole being was instantly mobilised into action. His profoundest sayings are often unpremeditated. His whole personality flashes into the right word or deed.

This implies a unity of personal life achieved without impoverishing the variety or vitality of its elements. It is here that the ideals of fiction fail. They are inhumanly consistent because they lack human complexity: they are sinless because they are bloodless. "The Gospels portray a character in which seemingly incompatible attributes inhere in a vital consistency. Single-hearted humility combines with astonishing self-assertion, an endowment of abnormal psychic powers with a constant self-restraint in the use of them, a loving interest in the smallest details of life with the consciousness of a universal mission. There results a unique blending of 'obedience in freedom, dignity in humility, strength in gentleness, mercy and severity, faithfulness to principle and sympathy, the interest of the artist in beauty and the righteousness of the prophet, the peace of the saint and the energy of the worker.'" We do not know by what discipline He won this inward whole-

ness; but we know that in proportion to the richness of a man's nature is the severity of the struggle by which he possesses his soul. The story of Jesus' baptism possibly gives us a glimpse of this. We are told that He saw a vision of "the heavens opened" and heard a heavenly voice. Such experiences, psychologists tell us, generally result from inward conflict and repression, and are the way in which that which has been struggled against reasserts itself in consciousness. And must we not think that the humility of Jesus struggled against the great place and destiny which fidelity to His nature and inward vocation thrust upon Him? Fitness for supreme service of God includes extreme reluctance to recognise itself. Hence the greatest prophets had their call in vision. And the vision of Jesus in baptism marks a conflict, pressed to the limits of tension, until the vision spoke for those deep realities of His being to whose awful annunciation His humility had hitherto demurred.

When we recognise that personality can be unified only by some sort of controlling idea, and that such an idea will be futile unless it is also a ruling passion,[1] we see how inadequate to Jesus is the term sinless. The characteristic of Jesus is not painful exactitude of conformity to a standard, but an abysmal passion for God and man. Our common humanity here yields its analogy. The more any soul achieves inward unity, the deeper and more intimate is its relation to the larger life around it. In order to unify his own inward life, a man needs both an idea of the meaning and purpose of the universe as it touches himself and loyalty to this idea. His shaping of the life before him goes back ultimately to his conviction as to what is behind life. And it is part of the achieved completeness of Jesus that His sense of this relation becomes so clear. Where He describes the motives of conduct, it is seldom, if ever, by assessment of results but nearly always by pointing to the root, Divine or other-

[1] "No heart is pure that is not passionate: no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."—Sir J. R. Seeley, *Ecce Homo.*

wise, from which the conduct springs: "More than this cometh of evil." "Fear not them . . . fear Him." "Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful." "That ye may be sons of your Father." His answer, "Why callest thou me good? None is good but One—God," suggests that Jesus never thought of human goodness except as a response to God's goodness. He evidently did not think of man, even in ideal, as complete in himself: to him human personality is a correlate to God.

The great religious and theological importance of this is obvious. Its elaboration is one of the main themes of the Fourth Gospel. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing." Jesus' insistence on, and exemplification of, the entire dependence of human goodness upon the Divine goodness lies behind the fact that we cannot think of Him apart from God.

§ 6. *His escape from self-glory.*

Here, in particular, we have the secret of His triumph in dealing with one of the most potent and subtle of all the rebels of our nature—self-glory. This is the peculiar temptation of the idealist and reformer. For a sustained effort to better the world, unless it grows directly from a dominating conviction of God's goodness, will be very likely to result in a conviction of our own superiority. But humility and dignity grow together in him who knows himself incomplete apart from God. And it is to be noted that Jesus allows self-emphasis only where it involves primacy in the risk and cost of service. Hard upon "Who say ye that I am?" comes "The Son of man must suffer." "If any man would come after me let him . . . take up his cross." He accepts a personal homage as an anointing for burial.

This religious root of Jesus' ethics made room also for an important condition of human experience. Purpose is so essential to personality that we are apt to think that

a perfect man would choose such a purpose as could be carried out without change or check to the end. But it is clear that if life is to have any spiritual value, experience must widen our contact with reality, and therefore broaden the base and adjust the form of our ideal. It is still clearer that the good we aim at may be thwarted by evil in others, and that to anticipate evil in others is to contribute to it. The perfect man, therefore, will not escape those reconsiderings and readjustments of purpose, those experiences of opposition and disappointment, which we know so well. And as with us, so with Jesus, these experiences drive a man back upon the fundamental source of his purpose, and the way in which he meets them reveals his heart of hearts.

And if a controlling idea and ruling passion is to unify personality wholesomely, it must be one that is big enough to be in touch with reality at all points. One of our chief weaknesses is that our idea of life is so often found alien to the material with which it has to deal, whether it be the pressure of nature or that of other lives on ours. In contrast to this, we mark that in the thought of Jesus, God and the universe are inseparable. His piety could not be distracted by Nature, for to Him Nature was never "without your Father." Other men, when moved by an overmastering interest, nearly always lose their sense of proportion in some reaches of life; but with Him (as in His judgment on the Sabbath, etc.) it grows directly from the central passion of His life. Hence, that rare union of intense religious fervour with the breadth and sensitiveness and sanity that mark His utterances.

§ 7. *His religious attitude to men.*

Another and most characteristic element in Jesus' life and teaching was His recognition that a man's relation to God was bound up with his relation to his fellows.[1] And applying this to Himself, we see that, just as behind all

[1] Matt. vi. 14, 15; vii. 1, 2, etc.

His activity was His fellowship with God, so in front of Him He saw the need that called Him brother. His Father's love to Him was the creative fiat of His own love for His fellow-men. As has been justly said: "There is nothing so exhausting as sympathy; and no burdens are so heavy as other people's burdens, and no revulsion so heart-sickening as moral revulsion. From all these Jesus never protected Himself. In meeting and bearing them it must have been that the infinite resources of the love of God bore Him on, carrying Him triumphantly over all the obstacles on which human love gets too quickly grounded."

Thus the other side of His inward triumph was His ascendancy over men. He called men to follow, and they followed. He bade them be other than they were, and they obeyed. He sought in their hearts for that imprisoned thing to which they had lost the clue, and He enthroned it in permanent sovereignty. His perfection was not static but vital, abounding, invasive. It was not self-careful: He did not fear contamination, for He transformed what He touched. The small fire is extinguished by what is fuel to white heat, so that He found an earnest of redemptive work amongst those from whom the Pharisees expected nothing but defilement.

And in this connection we have a striking instance of opposite extremes harmonised in His intensity of spirit. To be "the Christ" was to fill the highest rôle in the history of the world. And yet he did not treat men in mass, but gave His whole mind to the man or woman before Him, setting an absolute value on the individual human soul. The universalism of Jesus was not founded upon an abstract idea of humanity or upon insensibility to racial distinctions; He knew the value of being "a son of Abraham" (Luke xix. 9); He knew that "salvation is from the Jews" (John iv. 22). It depended rather upon His faith in, and His power to evoke and establish, the higher possibilities of personality in every man. His interest and

sympathy penetrated to the man beneath the Jew, and must therefore reach out beyond the Jews to mankind. That which lifts Him above national limitations is one and the same thing as that which gives Him His power over the individual human heart.

§ 8. *His personal insight.*

The story of the woman taken in adultery is a historic symbol of the way in which, at the presence of Jesus, the spell of conventional generalisations is broken and the soul stands in stark individuality. "He isolates her from her class till she stands 'alone in the midst,' and He isolates her accusers from theirs, so that they go out one by one. It is in this individual and personal interest that we see Jesus approaching the great class question which His contemporaries thought settled, and no one before had ever challenged." National prejudice could not hide from Him the wonder of a Gentile's faith. Beneath the ban which patriotism had placed upon the publican, He discerned the heartache and the hope, and called Levi to discipleship and Zacchæus to new manhood. Others might know "what manner of woman" it was that touched Him: He saw the strange greatness of her love, and knew what manner of woman she might become. "Thus did Jesus always penetrate through the class to the person, and thereby He breaks up the class division. This brings Him into controversies which He cannot and will not avoid. To avoid difficult situations is not to handle them; but in handling them He is led on into His great protagonism for humanity. And if we look for the results, we see them beyond the bitter enmities immediately aroused, in big historic facts like St. Paul's taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the Church's claiming the world for Christ. Had Jesus been held up by any limited class-consciousness or race-consciousness, He would have been one of Israel's greatest prophets, but not the Son of Man and Saviour of humanity."

§ 9. *His intense sympathy.*

All these things created for Him, in acuter form than we experience, those human conflicts that are so often the occasion of our defeat; and we can guess but a little of what this meant to Jesus in heart-searching and pain. Contact with the sin of others brought upon Him an emotional confusion and amazement and an inward contradiction like that which our own sin brings upon us.[1] This could not but be so. In so far as a man has conquered evil in himself and has learnt to love his fellows, he is pained by evil in them, not because it damages him directly, but because it destroys and degrades them. Not to be hurt by the sin of others is to cancel love's power to redeem them. What, then, did it mean to Jesus that He must bring not peace but a sword, that He must assert a higher loyalty than kinship to mother and brethren, that he must warn one Jew against another, that He must say to false leaders "Woe unto you"? The greater the love, the harder it is for love's sake to break fellowship. Now the triumph of Jesus here was in His acceptance of the perturbance and pain. Smaller men, Stoics and others, have kept their peace of mind in face of human evil by various forms of limitation, saying "This evil man hurts not me but himself only," and so have renounced the redemptive function of love. The triumph of Jesus was that in the choice between peace and love He let peace go. His loyalty both to fact and to human good was part of His loyalty to His Father, and He would not cheapen His loyalty to God by shutting His eyes or His heart to anything. Hence His "sorrow unto death" and the redemptive power of that sorrow.

Having thus tried to understand something of the personality of Jesus, we may return to the major conflict of His life.

[1] Cf. Mark iii. 5; viii. 12; xiv. 33, 34; John viii. 6, 8.

III

The Issue

§ 10. *The national appeal of Jesus.*

It can hardly be doubted that Jesus' main intent, so far as it touched the Jews, was concerned with them as a nation, and as a nation called by God to a special destiny. This was implied in His calling Israel "the sons of the Kingdom," in the number of the Twelve, and in His saying to them "Ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is perhaps best seen in the limitation of His own and His disciples' work to Israel, despite the obviously wider range of His purview. "To the Jew first" was for the world's sake no less than for Israel's.[1] And his aim had to be national even for the sake of the individual, for the soul of no Jew could be profoundly and radically moved except by that which touched his nation. The truth of this may be seen in the fact that because the nation was not won to Christianity, there soon ceased to be any body of Jewish Christians, and a century after Jesus' death the separation between Jew and Christian was complete. The tremendous impact of Jesus' personality detached from Israel a splinter or "remnant" that vitalised the world. But this was done only at the cost of the Cross. Peter and the rest were freed from their bondage to nationalism only when they could say to the accepted authorities of their nation, "Jesus whom ye crucified."

Jesus would have been untrue to the best tradition of His race and unacquainted with its greatest power, if He had not shared its patriotism to the full. His ambition

[1] It is probably in connection with this limitation that we should understand the apparent Jewish exclusiveness of Jesus' first answer to the Syro-Phœnician woman. Until He had come to issue with Israel, His work among Gentiles must of necessity be exceptional. About the time of this incident we must place the saying that the Gentiles would repent more readily than the Jews (Luke x. 13), and it may be that in the woman's appeal He felt the temptation to desert the harder for the easier.

for His people must have been in line with that of the greatest hearts of old, that Israel should give to the world the truth of the living God. Thus upon Him, the supreme man of His race, came the supreme crisis at once of His race and the world. No other has had or can have such a task. But how hard the task of bringing the Jews to such a knowledge of God as would make them love the Gentiles! Yet nothing but this could save Israel from ruinous struggle with Rome, or lift the one living religion of the Roman world to the height at which it could serve the whole world's need of a truth to live by.

§ 11. *The conflicting nationalism of the Jews.*

This endeavour to overcome the hardening nationalism of His people's religion was the main cause of Jesus' rejection by them. The opposition began with His free interpretation of the law and increased with His disregard of those elements in it that were peculiarly nationalistic. These things, together with His repudiation of nationalistic Messianism in favour of one that was true to the universal reach of God's love, enabled His opponents to retain their influence upon the masses that were at first superficially drawn to Him, and in the end to turn them against Him. He is unique in this, as in other things, that that race that slew the prophets and built their tombs never rescinded its rejection of Him. A recent Jewish writer, otherwise sympathetic, gives as the cause of his people's rejection of Jesus (which he justifies) the anti-nationalistic implications of Jesus' teaching.[1]

We thus see the reason of Jesus' concentration upon Israel, the nature of the conflict which His truth provoked and the opposition which He encountered, and the necessity for His pressing for a national decision, although it should involve His crucifixion.

His triumph here was, in the first place, the triumph of loyalty to truth, and of love to God and man, over the shame and agony of the cross. He might have asked less

[1] Dr. Jos. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth,* Eng. trs., p. 390.

and got it. He might have formed a sect among the Jews, and then the Gentiles would have had nothing. He might have turned away from the Jews, but then the Gentiles would have been given a truth that shunned its own issues. History itself thus compels every Christian to say, "He died for me."

§ 12. *The death-grapple with nationalism in religion.*

For the significance of Jesus in this connection is that, at such cost to Himself, *He mediated the transition of the greatest of all national religions into that which Christians claim to be the only truly universal religion, i.e.,* the religion that claims man as man, and that throughout the whole range of his being. To borrow words of H. G. Wood's: "Admittedly the teaching of Jesus embraced, as Klausner says, 'a conception of God and a moral ideal acceptable to all mankind.' It thus offered to the world that universal religion for which the establishment of the Roman Empire had created the need. Yet Jesus did not merely strip the accidental elements from the fundamentals of the Jewish faith. He did more than winnow the wheat from the chaff. He answered that deeper longing of the ancient world for a divine Saviour. 'Our heart must have someone to honour, someone by whose example it may consecrate its inner life.' In Jesus men saw embodied the conception of God and the moral ideal which they could not but reverently acknowledge. Thus Jesus Himself was the centre of the new world-religion. He brought the new wine that burst the wine-skins of Judaism. He was the touchstone whereby all thoughts must be tried, the Master without whom men had no sure spring of action. Yet the connection with Judaism, the claim to fulfil law and prophecy was essential." For no religion can establish itself that is not historic. No unfathered truth is legitimate to man's soul. Therefore, in the nature of things, the true universal religion can grow only from the highest national religion. But the highest national religion can hardly exist without an intense patriotism

that will almost inevitably grow into nationalism; the very development that gave Israel its supreme religious significance brought with it a nationalism fiercely repugnant to the universalising of its cult. It is also clear that the only force capable of effecting the necessary change is a love that does not stop at one's fellow-Jew but extends to the Gentile enemy and oppressor. Jesus taught that man must love so, because that is the quality of God's love. He saw, as we now see, that nothing else could save Israel from suicidal war with Rome, and give to the world the truth for lack of which it was dying. But His demand touched to the quick the national pride and self-love of the Jews. They rejected it, and so thrust upon Jesus the agony of Gethsemane and Golgotha. His position in history as mediating the transition from the highest national religion to the highest universal religion thus involved the suffering in which His life closed.

§ 13. *The means He employed.*

But an understanding of the redemptive power of Jesus' suffering needs a closer examination of all that was involved in it. The greatest obstacle to Jesus' success with Israel was the counter-influences of the religious authorities, which had their centre at Jerusalem. Thither He turned that He might come to issue with them. His entry to Jerusalem was probably rather a suggestion than a claim of Messiahship, and the manner in which it was made, especially the beast upon which Jesus rode, was a repudiation of that warlike Messiahship which alone was attractive to the populace. In any case His entry was not so challenging to the existing religious order as the act that followed—the cleansing of the Temple. Single-handed, He attacked the *régime* that betrayed the spirit of free worship to the interests of convenience and commercial gain. His condemnation of the hierarchy's abuse of their trust, and the ideal for which He appealed to His people, found expression in the combination of two

prophetic phrases, that what God had meant to be "a house of prayer for all nations" had been turned into a "den of robbers."

In this He was not acting on the impulse of the moment: He had been there before and had not so acted. What, then, was the significance of this new, deliberate and open act? It was intended to bring the slumbering conscience of the nation to a crisis of decision by the awakening shock of a prophetic challenge. It was calculated to have one of two results. The Temple authorities, and the Scribes and Pharisees behind them, might possibly be compelled by popular pressure to accept at Jesus' hands the reform which He thus claimed the right to initiate. In that case their prestige would cease to hinder Him. This seems to have been His first hope. He won the people on the issue of the cleansing of the Temple courts and of their use as a regular place of prophetic teaching, so that the open attack of the authorities was baffled (Mark xi. 27-33); and if it had not been for the treachery of Judas, the calculated secrecy of His private movements would have defeated any plot to seize Him in the absence of the multitude.

But there was another possibility. If the authorities did not yield to Him, His persistent presence and activity would drive them to kill Him. This was by far the more likely of the two possibilities, and Jesus was prepared for it. When He spoke the parable of the usurping husbandmen He knew that the authorities were plotting His destruction. But He looked for triumph through death, and for the joy of it was prepared to endure the cross. The parable ends with the words of Ps. cxviii.: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner." In Isa. liii. and Dan. vii. He had read the truths that God's fullest power lay behind, and took effect, through service and suffering, and that the Kingdom must be entered through tribulation. He trusted that His death would be a ransom for many, and that the baptism of suffering through which He had to pass would

open the door to larger life. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." And we can see something of how this should be. If the authorities should kill Jesus on an issue in which the people recognised Him to be acting as a prophet of God, they would lose their influence as surely as if they yielded to Him: and at the same time all that He had taught of God would be unspeakably enhanced and enforced by the appeal of His suffering and death. Such was the actual effect of His death on the disciples; and the people might well have been similarly moved.

§ 14. *The immediate outcome.*

But if this was Jesus' hope, Israel denied Him its fulfilment. The mass of the people were not willing to follow Jesus along a line which cut across their existing Messianic ideal of a nationalistic theocracy. And so Jesus perceived that their first enthusiasm for Him in His controversy with the Temple authorities was ebbing; and His forecast of the destruction of the Temple (Mark xiii. i f.) indicates His final abandonment of hope for official Judaism and probably of a great part of His hope for the people. Judas' treachery, however, made it certain to Jesus that He must die with His people's consent, and that, so far as the vast mass of them was concerned, His death would be in vain, for the present hesitancy would turn to repudiation when the priests could set Him before them as an overpowered and manacled claimant to Messiahship. These were the circumstances in Gethsemane, with the open country still before Him. If He did not escape and devote Himself henceforth to the few faithful, it must have been because He recognised the necessity of abiding to the utmost the issue with His people. At this point of the story we are told that He was overcome with a "sorrow unto death," and on the Cross there was an agony of heart that the agonies of crucifixion could not blunt, one which in its effect caused Pilate to marvel that He was so soon dead.

Now it is unreasonable not to connect these facts. It is a psychological impossibility for a man to die of sorrow if he knows that by death he will gain what is dearer to him than life. We see in the sorrow that was deadlier than the Cross what His failure to win Israel meant to Jesus. And of that sorrow His story is not without premonitions. His upbraiding of the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not, His weeping over Jerusalem because her children might have gathered to Him, but did not, are both evidence that Jesus expected a far greater response than He received, and was deeply pained by the disappointment. We must now consider what that disappointment involved.

Israel, in rejecting Him, rejected the only alternative line along which its intense patriotism might have avoided the horrible and all-embracing destruction of the war with Rome. And Jesus knew that if the nation did not follow Him, any who might become His followers, being drawn from the sane and wholesomely pious element, would thereby leave the nation as a whole to swifter and surer destruction. He knew, therefore, that the Jewish nationalism to which He had offered an alternative would, by its conflict with Him, be the blinder and the more fanatic.

Had there been anything like the national response for which Jesus asked, the first Church would numerically have been incomparably stronger, and the tremendous force of Jewish patriotism would have been with it instead of against it. Had this happened, it would surely have gone far to fulfil the possibilities proclaimed in Jesus' call, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Israel did not repent, and instead of the Kingdom of God came the Dark Ages. Do we, in order to account for the sorrow of Gethsemane and the Cross, need anything more than a comparison of what Jesus knew might have been, with what actually was?

We must, of course, remember that the failure of a moral appeal turns, not upon God's power and willingness,

but upon the power of choice which God had given to men. Love should always reverence freedom and recognise that the highest good must be freely chosen, and may, therefore, be refused. Jesus' faith in God and God's goodness and power did not falter. In death He commends His spirit into His Father's hands.

§ 15. *The hope that remained.*

Though Israel as a whole had refused what He longed to give them by His death, yet their refusal did not exhaust the possibilities of the power of love's suffering. There was still His hopes for the faithful few and the world beyond them.[1] How these hopes might be realised He did not clearly know, while, on the other hand, all that this meant in the sin and ruin of His people was very clearly present to Him. He knew that His truth would be vindicated: but vindication of truth may be either in the enhancement of the life that serves it or in the ruin of the life that rejects it. But what consolation could it be to Jesus in His rejection, to know that His truth would be vindicated in the agony and destruction of the men and women and children of His race and the ruin and agelong darkness of the world?

And the hope that still remained must be put into the perspective of facts. When we compare the few that were His with the myriads that rejected Him, when we compare the narrow stream of Christian life making a perturbed and often sullied way through centuries of darkness and brutality, with what might have been had Israel accepted Him, it seems that Israel's refusal destroyed the world's opportunity which He had given His life to realise, and consigned mankind to another long period of slow struggle and agony, from which it is our greatest hope that we are at length emerging.

[1] "Even in Gethsemane the cup from which He prays to be freed is still 'the cup which my Father hath given me,' and He was sustained by the thought that His dark experience had been foreshadowed in the words and lives of the prophets. It behoved the Christ to suffer thus, and His death itself would move men to repentance."—H. G. Wood.

We have also to bear in mind that if Jesus' assurance of the future was such as to warrant a profound *present* joy, then we must regard the sorrow of Gethsemane and the Cross as to that extent partial and superficial, a temporary state of mind in which His deepest interests were not involved. But that does not accord with the terms of the record: a more absolute sorrow could not be described. The Church has always seen here Jesus' descent to the utmost depth of woe, and in the very absoluteness of His sorrow has found the absoluteness of His love, and so of the salvation which He won by it.

In view of this it seems necessary to ask what relation His hope of the future bore to His sorrow. Did the vision of the future Church comfort Him? We might say "yes," if we interpret "the vision of the future Church" as the hope of what God might do for and through the Church; but we must say "no" if we think of the Church itself. Morally and spiritually the Church was represented to Jesus by His actual followers: the men of the future were not likely to be very much better than they. Christian men and women have always felt that they had no right to boast over the Jews, much less over the Twelve. And of the Twelve one had betrayed, one denied, and the rest deserted Him. What consolation had Jesus here? It may be said that He had strong hope that they would repent. But where it concerns a moral change, the very grounds of hope are a condition of pain. The hope that a man will change morally for the better is based on the belief that he need not be as he is; but this belief makes his present state the more painful to those who love him. To allow any sort of optimism to lessen the pain we feel at the discovery of moral evil in those we love is to remove one of the strongest incentives to their repentance, and so to contribute to the defeat of our hope. An essential element in the recovery of the Twelve was their belief that Jesus suffered for their sins. Does not this mean that they were conscious that their denial and desertion had contributed to His deathly sorrow? And their part here may

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have been no small one. To be deserted by a friend is more grievous than to be struck by a foe. And we have to remember that, long before the last, there was much in the Twelve that hurt the soul of Jesus as they continually misunderstood Him in ways that showed how much they shared the outlook of the nation that rejected Him.

We must also note that this rejection which was sealed by Judas' departure from the Last Supper, presented itself as putting an end to Jesus' activity alike for His people and for His followers. Now while we can do something for those we love, we do not feel to the full the force of the evil from which we are trying to save them. But when we have done all, and the evil is still there, then the soul, no longer occupied with what needs to be done, is bare to the blow of all that is at enmity with love. So the change from the kingly calm of the Last Supper to the agony of the Garden has both historical and psychological congruity.

§ 16. *Triumph in failure.*

It was the greatest triumph of Jesus that He would take no means to shield His soul from the full impact of the fact of moral failure and sin both in Israel's rejection and His disciples' desertion. His trust in God's will did not dull His sorrow for the fate of His people, or lessen for Him the burden of human ignorance and sin. He refused not only the anodyne of wine and myrrh, but all artificial anodynes of soul. He might have comforted Himself with scorn for the unworthy. He might have escaped from the pain of present facts by telling himself that it "would come all right in the end"; but He who truly loves the sinner and also appreciates the awful implications of human freedom, cannot thus lightly heal His hurt. He would not limit His sympathy with God and man; He could not renounce the splendid vocation and possibilities of mankind, nor shut His eyes to its heart-

breaking actualities; and therefore He could not limit His sufferings.

Thus, in the failure of intent, that which is behind intent becomes visible. To be true in failure, to refuse to be fully consoled by what seems a second best, is the final and most revealing triumph of which spirit is capable. And the triumph is great in ultimate effect just in the degree to which at the time the failure seems real and great. Success is always compatible with, and generally accompanied by, an element of self-glory: failure lays bare the deepest reaches of the soul, and makes possible the only indubitable proof of a completely unselfish love. So in Jesus' experience of failure the love of God found its one adequate revelation, its one effective instrument.

In view of the result, it may seem unwarranted to speak of Jesus' labour of love in terms of failure at all. But do we see sin seriously enough unless we see in it defeat of God's will? The optimism that is content to reckon upon God's overruling of human freedom cannot but diminish the urgency of the Gospel. The sorrow of Jesus reveals to mankind what sin means to Infinite Love: and the reality and depth of that sorrow answers to the reality and seriousness of sin's resistance and defeat of love. Such sorrow is a reaction to the frustration of purpose, and cannot therefore be part of any purpose, human or divine; it reveals love's inmost heart, of which purpose is the outcome but not the completest evidence or exponent.

The Resurrection of Jesus crowned and perpetuated the triumph of His life, and especially made clear and fruitful for others His triumph through failure and death; but this will be more fitly dealt with as part of His life in the experience of His first followers. The triumph of His earthly life was that He achieved a personality so full of the power of goodness, so utterly responsive to God, so completely filled with the Spirit, that those who

knew Him best unfeignedly acknowledged Him—even through the mist of strong prepossessions—to be the Christ, the Viceroy of Heaven, whom they left all to follow. This came in the pursuit of His intent. The triumph of His death was the triumph of utter faithfulness and love, the triumph of that deeper thing that lies behind intent and remains when intent is defeated. The triumph of His life was that men saw God in the completeness of His invading and triumphant goodness: the triumph of His death was that men saw God in His pain and shame and heart-break and death. And the experience of all Christendom—in which the superhistorical elements in Christ's life have growingly come to stand out in relief, as the essentials of His personality—has been that His death is the greater triumph, to which the triumph of His life contributed, but without which it was not final. This is intelligible; for if we know God in the suffering and death of Jesus, then we know that God's love is not disguised self-love, that God loves His enemies and loves them at the cost of pain and disappointment, and we know that God loves us, who have been faithless and opposed; we know, too, that there is that in God which commands us to the uttermost, for it calls for no sacrifice in which it does not lead.

And how unspeakably great the achievement—to make men believe that God knows the pain of disappointed love, that the *ultima ratio* of the King of Heaven was the Cross and a sorrow unto death? To-day we find it hard to believe this when our eyes wander from the Cross. How much harder was it for the Jew, with his Deuteronomic ideas of prosperity and adversity, to believe that a crucified, heart-broken man could be God's Messiah! Yet it happened. Nothing is surer in the history of the first century than, on the one hand, the ingrained prejudice of Jews against a crucified Messiah, and, on the other, the Church's enthusiastic belief that this Jesus who had been crucified was alive, was Christ and Lord, seated with God on the throne of the universe, and that He was

with them "all the days," enabling them to share His triumph.

§ 17. *This attempt at historical and psychological elucidation* rests upon the assumption that the eternal and saving truth of God lies simply in the story of the life and death of Jesus. When we contemplate that story we feel that therein we know God, "whom to know is life eternal." [1] In the story itself enough is patent for the simple mind: for there is seen One who in utter loyalty to truth and utter love to God and man gave Himself in life and death, in unstinted endeavour and in deadly sorrow, and thus arrests and holds us with the absolute authority of God. The need of more than this comes from the need of relating this experience to other knowledge. It is felt by all to whom other avenues of reality than religion are also important; for otherwise the supremacy of Jesus becomes for them only partial and departmental. And, besides, all elucidation that brings the Gospel story of Jesus into confirmatory relationship with other reaches of experience does something else; it helps us to a better understanding and a more wholehearted worship of Him. But these aspects of the Incarnation fail to be considered in the chapters which follow, rather than in one devoted to the historic Jesus.

The attempt here made to understand the life and death of Jesus may perhaps seem to give us a Gospel too much involved in historic and psychological detail. But what has in the past been called a "simple Gospel" has been a verbally simple statement implying and resting upon implications of very speculative and elaborate dogma. And, after all, history and psychology are more humanly understandable than metaphysics and dogmatic theology.

[1] 'The Christian Gospel is not that there has been an Incarnation, but that we may see God "in the face of Jesus Christ." ' Prof. W. R. Matthews, in *The Future of Christianity*, p. 111.

NOTE A.—*Daniel vii. and "the Son of Man,"* by DR. J. VERNON BARTLET.

From the meaning required by the context of Dan. vii. 13 Jewish thought in the intervening period had in certain circles departed, taking the poetic symbolism of Dan. vii. —the last of the Old Testament "prophetic" writings, as it is the first of Jewish "apocalyptic"—in a literalistic way. It came to see in "one like unto a son of man" (*i.e.*, a man), symbolizing "the saints of the Most High" in a corporate capacity, to whom "the Kingdom" or rule on earth was to be given, a supernatural being "coming with the clouds of heaven" down to earth, where God was about to set up His new order by righteous judgment. This heavenly being was then and there to be installed in the function of judge, primarily of the Gentile sinners, and King of Israel. Exactly when this type of Messianic Hope first took shape it is hard even to surmise. Much depends on the date of the Parables of the Book of Enoch, which I incline to put not earlier than the end of the reign of Herod the Great. To their conceptions and to their use of language are probably due certain passages in the Gospels, where a more literalistic sense has been given by Christian tradition to utterances of Jesus Himself. Be that as it may, it is most probable that He used the phrase "the son of Man" in some of His most characteristic sayings—especially with allusion to His human lot on earth—in a sense determined wholly by His favourite parts of Scripture, *e.g.*, Gen. i. 27 (cf. Mark x. 6 read in the light of Ps. viii. 4-6; cf. verse 2 with the "babes" of Matt. xi. 25) and "the Servant of the Lord" passages (cf. Luke iv. 17-19). The apocalyptic sense on the other hand, equivalent to the heavenly Messiah, is really excluded from the use of "the son of Man" in a passage like Matt. xvi. 13, 16 f., where the answer to "Who do men say that the son of Man is?" would thereby be

reduced to the mere supplying of a synonym and cease to be a venture of faith.

That is, "the son of Man"—according to a familiar Hebrew use of the genitive to emphasise essential *quality* (*e.g.*, "son of Belial," "sons of the prophets")—was used by Jesus to suggest the typical or generic sense of man (as in God's address to Ezekiel as "son of Man"). It is in fact the more concrete Hebrew way of expressing what our more abstract mode of speech would mean by "ideal man," as in Ps. viii. 4, where it helps to define the sense in which "man" is there used. So Jesus is "man proper," or after God's full purpose in creating man. He was thus the realisation in a particular person of the symbolic or typical figure in Dan. vii., manlike or human, in contrast to animal or brutal, in essential quality: and so could represent and foreshadow the universal destiny of man or "humanity."

Note B.—*The Voice at the baptism of Jesus,* by Dr. J. Vernon Bartlet.

The reference to Ps. ii. 7, though commonly assumed, is really very doubtful, since "the beloved," whether to be taken as an epithet of "my Son" or as another title in apposition to it, does not occur there. On the other hand, it does occur in apposition to "my child" (*pais*) in the Greek version of Isa. xlii. 1 (as cited in Matt. xii. 18)—the "Servant of the Lord" passage which is clearly in view in the latter part of the address "in whom I am well pleased." "My beloved," then, may well be the equivalent of "my elect," which is clearly a fresh title of the "servant" in Isa. xlii. 1 and there immediately precedes these words (cf. Luke ix. 35, at the Transfiguration, where the sufferings of God's servants seem to be the theme of Jesus' spiritual converse with Moses and Elijah, and where Mark and Matthew have "my beloved"). Note, too, that in John i. 34, the Spirit-Anointed one is thereby recognised by the Baptist to be

'the elect of God" (so the best text), who is also the "Lamb of God" (i. 29, 36) that "bears away the sins of the world." There surely Isa. liii. is in view. It may well be, then, that "My Son" at the Baptism represents "my child" in Isa. xlii. 1. Thus on the whole, reference at the Baptism (in Jesus' mind) to Ps. ii seems to be excluded.

The true view seems rather to be that these two forms of Israel's national hope, represented typically by Ps. ii. and Isa. xlii. and liii., are really incompatible in spirit and must be treated as alternatives, one of which was strongly held by the Jewish nation in Jesus' day, the other by Him. And as the former was definitely rejected by Jesus as alien to His intimate experience of God's real nature and will, so the Jewish people as a whole rejected Him as the archetypal embodiment of its own highest vocation as the "servant of the Lord." In this very issue, that of the nationalist ideal (whereby Israel was called to "lose its life," in the more limited and lower sense, in order to find it in the higher and universal one), the whole historic ministry of Jesus—the supreme drama of history, with the culminating tragedy of the Cross—actually summed itself up. Here lay Jesus' real "Messianic Secret," of which scholars have written much of recent years (often on largely mistaken "apocalyptic" lines) and which is one of a profoundly spiritual nature, having its roots in His inmost religious personality. It was this which He tried gradually to convey in effect to His beloved people, and when they failed Him, to His chosen disciples—to the latter more explicitly towards the close of His earthly ministry, when the Cross, in fulfilment of Isa. liii., was already looming near upon the horizon. And it is in terms of this that His personality unfolds itself to every

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRIST OF APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCE

H. T. Andrews

SYNOPSIS

Introduction: the three factors which determined the development of Christian theology in the Apostolic Age. (1) The Christian facts. (2) The influence of current thought. (3) Christian experience. The importance of the third factor. The New Testament as the record of Christian experience, and the different types of experience which it describes.

I. The Characteristics of Christian Experience.

(1) Everything centres in the Person of Christ. (2) The continued Presence of Christ in the history of Early Christianity. (3) The influence of Christ upon the individual. The Pauline experience of the power of the eternal Christ which resulted in His doctrine of Predestination. (4) The communal experience of the presence of Christ in the Christian fellowship. (5) The experience of forgiveness and the various forms which it assumed.

II. The Postulates of Christian Experience.

(6) The reality of the Christian facts as against the mythical theory. (7) The reality of the Resurrection of Jesus. (8) The reality of the new moral power which flowed from the Person of Christ.

III. The Successive Explanations of Christian Experience.

(9) The central problem with which all explanations have to deal. (10) The earliest Christian creed "Jesus is the Messiah" and its inadequacy for Christian thought. (11) The development of the first creed into the Benediction. (12) The cosmic conception of Christ in the later Pauline Epistles and its validity. (13) The attempt of the Epistle to the Hebrews to explain Christ in terms of the Platonic philosophy. (14) The significance of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. (15) Conclusion: and the problem which the New Testament discussion presents to Christian thought.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRIST OF APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCE

MANY modern attempts to reconstruct the development of thought in the Apostolic Age fail because they omit the dominant factor in the situation. They assume that Christianity arose from the union of two elements and two elements alone—(1) the simple historical facts connected with the life and teaching of Jesus; and (2) the infiltration of the religious and philosophical ideas which were current in the thought of the age. There can be no doubt, of course, that both these factors played an important part in the formation of later Christianity, and no reconstruction of its development can be scientific which does not allow full play to both. But there is another factor, too often ignored, which exercised an enormous influence on the formation of Christian faith, and that is the continuous and permanent religious experience of the Christians of the Apostolic Age. It was not so much what happened in Galilee and Jerusalem during the earthly life of Jesus (though this, of course, was never forgotten) that counted most with the men who moulded the Faith of the primitive Church; it was rather what was happening in their own souls. The pivot of their theology lay not so much in the past as in the present. It was what Jesus had become to them in their own deep experience that formed the central fact around which their thought and teaching revolved.

I

Characteristics of Christian Experience

§ 1. *The centrality of Jesus.*

It is not too much to say that the New Testament itself is the record of the religious experience of the first three generations of Christians. It must not be assumed that this experience was uniform and identical. On the contrary, it has many and varied types. If, for instance, we ask the writer of the Epistle of James, What do you think of Christ? the answer comes "He is the revealer and embodiment of the supreme moral law, the 'royal law' of righteousness which makes the soul free." If we put the same question to the author of the Apocalypse, we get the reply that Jesus is the great hope and guarantee of the final victory of God's truth and righteousness. If we interrogate the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told in the language of Platonic philosophy, that Jesus is the "ideal High Priest who offered the ideal sacrifice in the ideal sanctuary." The fourth Gospel depicts Jesus as the supreme mystic or spiritual personality, living in the most intimate relationship with the Father. And the Apostle Paul, the most catholic and many-sided of all the New Testament writers, includes in his portrayal of Jesus all the elements emphasised by the other teachers. Jesus to Paul is all that the others claimed for Him. He is, as James said, the revealer of a new moral law of liberty. He is no less the guarantee of the final victory of righteousness, the world's Redeemer—"the power of God unto righteousness," and the supreme mystic, with whom every Christian lives in intimate fellowship sharing His life of Divine communion.

But though there are many types of religion and faith in the New Testament, they have this common element: they *all* centre in Jesus. Jesus is the focus of them all, the heart and core alike of their worship and their creed. Men may differ, and differ widely, in their religious experi-

ence; they may differ, too, in their Christological interpretations; but as far as our evidence goes, it is their relation to Jesus that constitutes the essence of their religion and forms the chief dynamic and motive of their faith.

There is a great sentence in the second letter which Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Thanks be unto God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ"; and that sentence represents the universal feeling of the early Christian Church. The conviction is everywhere present in the New Testament that behind the action of the individual, behind, too, the progress of the Church, there is always the impulse of Christ—guiding, inspiring, compelling obedience. It is not the power or the wisdom of the Church and its leaders that secures success. The Church simply marches in the triumphal procession of Christ, celebrating as it were His victory. The initiative and the power to achieve alike come from Christ.

§ 2. *The presence of Christ.*

This supreme fact in the religious experience of the early Christians finds abundant illustration both in the lives of individuals and in the history of the Church as a whole. No one can read the story told in Acts without feeling the sense of a divine presence and a divine inspiration at every important juncture in the narrative. We are conscious from the start that mere human resources and human efforts are altogether inadequate to explain the facts. No book in the New Testament is so full of the supernatural as Acts; and the supernatural element in it, to use a paradox, is never more supernatural than when it works in what may be termed natural ways. The spread of Christianity in the first generation cannot be explained on any naturalistic hypothesis. We may analyse the forces which favoured the expansion of Christianity, as Harnack, for instance, has done, and we may find many elements in the condition of the times that helped the missionary enterprises of the early Christians; but

everything has been said, and every allowance has been made for every favouring circumstance, there is no evading the impression that behind all the history of the Apostolic Age stands the impulse and power of Christ. The record of St. Paul's second missionary journey, with its inhibitions and its tragic failures at the start is sufficient by itself to prove that the missionary work of the Apostle did not develop simply in accordance with his own plans and purposes, but was sometimes deflected and turned in new directions, in spite of his own programme, by what was felt to be the Lord's own Spirit that determined his decisions. The Book of Acts thus leaves us with the feeling that its wonderfully triumphant drama was due, not so much to Peter or Paul or any other human force, but to Christ Himself.

§ 3. *The power of Christ.*

What is true of the Church as a whole in its progress in the Apostolic Age is true of it only because it is true of its individual members. In fact, the main impulse always comes from the inspiration of its leaders. Nothing is more clear in the Pauline Epistles than the fact that their writer feels that the whole of his life from the beginning to the end is under the constraint of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He was divinely called by God from his mother's womb. His conversion was due to the inbreak of the living Christ into his life. He had been seized hold of by Christ Jesus. He felt himself to be His chosen vessel to bear His name abroad. The urge of Christ was always upon him. It was the divine energy which worked through him. "I labour," he writes to the Colossians, "striving according to Christ's energy which energises mightily in me." He describes himself as bound in the spirit, a bond-slave of Christ Jesus. He was carried onward as with a flood. His whole life was dominated and governed by the Spirit of Christ. He speaks sometimes as if his own personality had been submerged and lost in Christ. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

"For me to live is Christ." His life was "hid with Christ in God." The sense of the continuous presence of Christ is the dynamic principle of Paul's life and work. In the Epistles the living Christ is everywhere. Every road that Paul travels is like the road to Damascus. This "Christ-mysticism," as Deissmann calls it, is the most characteristic element in the faith of the great Apostle. The supreme achievement of Paul lies in the fact that he taught the Church, which had hitherto used only the past and future tenses when it taught of Christ, to use the present tense as well. Christ to Paul was not only a great memory and a great hope, He was also a living present reality. The living Christ was as great an actuality in the experience of Paul as the historical Jesus was to the disciples on the hills of Galilee.

So strong is Paul's feeling that his whole life was under the dominance of Christ, that he uses language which it was quite easy for Augustine to translate into the doctrine of Predestination. The classical statement in Romans viii. 28-29, if it stood alone would go far to justify the construction which Augustine and Calvin put upon it in later times. The doctrine of Predestination flows out of an overwhelming religious experience—an experience that the supreme fact in life is the divine compulsion acting on the human spirit—and is its natural corollary. The real mistake here lies in taking a half-truth and treating it as if it were a whole truth, and hardening it into a theological dogma. But for the religious experience of Paul, the Church would probably never have had a doctrine of Predestination. Its doctrine of Predestination, at any rate in its later forms, is a misinterpretation of that experience; but the fact that the experience gave rise to the doctrine proves how tremendous the experience itself must have been.

§ 4. *The Christian experience communal.*

And this experience is not merely individual; it was communal as well. It was the experience of the Christian

fellowship. The Church is conceived of as the "body of Christ." The phrase is, of course, a metaphor with vast implications. We use the term "body" to denote the organism by which personality finds the means of self-expression. The artist and the musician, for instance, must necessarily make use of the faculties of the body, before they can convey to other hearts and minds the visions and symphonies which have come to them in their moments of illumination. So it was with Christ. The earthly body which the historical Jesus had used for the purpose of self-expression was broken on the Cross. He needed a new body and He made it of men. There are two statements which Paul uses in two consecutive chapters of 1 Corinthians which always ought to be brought into relation. The one is the statement in the institution of the Communion Service, "This is my body, which is for you." The other is to be found in the words, "Ye are the body of Christ." What the earthly body was to the Jesus of history, the Church is to the eternal Spirit of Christ. It is the organ and instrument by means of which He works upon the world. The Christian community, therefore, no less than the individual Christian, exists for one main purpose, to be the vehicle through which the living Christ may exercise an influence on mankind.

The communal experience of the Church had another effect. It demonstrated the universality of the Christian faith. It proved that Christianity was not meant to be the religion of the Jewish race alone, but the religion of the world. The arguments of the Apostle Paul in Galatians and Romans would not have been half so convincing if they had not been reinforced by the facts of Christian experience. Christian experience triumphed over all the barriers of race and caste. There were no national "chartered channels" through which it flowed. It came to all men alike, irrespective of their racial origin or their social status. For Christian experience t[illegible]

was neither "Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all." It was this experience that "Christ is all and in all" that finally gave the death-blow to the position of the Judaizers.

One practical result of this religious experience was that it equipped men to bear "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" which often befell the early Church. The hardships attendant upon missionary travel in the first century were immense, as we know from the statements of St. Paul's Epistles; and yet Paul can write: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content . . . in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want; I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Words like these represent a sense of triumph over the most untoward external circumstances; and this sense of triumph is one of the most common features in the faith of the Apostolic Age. So Peter at the end of his life, and writing to those whose Christian faith, like his own, was then face to face with suffering and danger of death for their Master's name, can write: "Whom not having seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unutterable and full of glory" (i. 8). Such was the power of Christ's personality, and of His triumphant example as when alone and deserted He faced the Cross and its seeming defeat, to inspire the sense of personal fellowship with Himself in the early Christians. Thus it was that Christianity brought into men's lives a sense of exultation and joy which seems only to have increased as the trials intensified. The invincible confidence that filled the minds of Christians is well expressed in the words of one of the latest writers of the New Testament, who in spite of all the persecutions and fiery trials that had befallen the Church yet says: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

§ 5. *Forgiveness, in Christian experience.*

But there was a preliminary religious experience which alone made the experience of the triumphant presence of Christ possible, and that was the experience of redemption and forgiveness. Christianity was recognised from the first as "the power of God unto salvation." The redemptive experience, of course, must have varied with different individuals. The Christian appeal touched the hearts of many different types of people. There were some who had been for long years seekers after truth and God, and who found the end of their quest in the Christian faith. "The acknowledgment of God in Christ" solved all their problems and gave them a philosophy of life which appealed to heart and conscience alike. This class of converts, however, must have been in the minority. For the mass of Christians the new faith constituted not so much an intellectual as a moral regeneration.

Here too, within this moral sphere, there were *different varieties of experience.* There were some like the Apostle Paul, for instance, who had always striven to achieve the moral ideal; and it was their sensitive conscience, their high moral standards and their acute moral earnestness which made them conscious of their impotence and failure. The confession of Paul: "The good which I would I do not, the evil that I would not, that I do," is not unlike, as far as phrasing goes, the confession of the Roman poet Ovid: "Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor." In fact, the one might very well be a free translation of the other. The difference between the two confessions lies in this: the confession of Ovid is merely a casual sigh, a token of the homage that vice pays to virtue; the confession of Paul represents a soul's tragedy. If we ask the question why it is that some men—Ovid, for instance —come so lightly out of the moral struggle with scarcely a blow struck or a scar to show, while others, like St. Paul, emerge from the grim encounter maimed and mangled and half-dead; the answer surely cannot be that Paul was by nature a worse man than Ovid, and so

had a harder battle to fight. Rather the answer is this: the one was endowed with keener moral insight and stronger moral earnestness than the other, and fought hard where the other merely capitulated to the foe. It was because of the keenness of his moral vision and his utter devotion to his moral ideal that the fight became so full of anguish for Paul. It is always a tragic thing for a man to find out too late that he has surrendered his life to some quest which is quite beyond his reach. But when that quest is the moral ideal, and when failure to attain means the ruin of all his hopes for this world and the next, the baffled soul can only cry out in its agony, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We know how Paul found the dynamic for which he was searching in Christ. His interpretation of the mode in which the relief came to him, his philosophy of redemption, may be open to modern objections, since they are expressed, as they were bound to be, in the categories and thought-forms of the first century; but there can be no doubt about the experience itself. The Christian faith, and that alone, rescued Paul from the moral *impasse* into which he had fallen through his devotion to the ideal in the Jewish law; and before we condemn this struggle of Paul's as morbid and misdirected, we should remember that his experience has been repeated in many of the finest souls in all the centuries. As Professor T. H. Green, one of the greatest ethical teachers of modern times, has said: "There have been many in all ages, whether nursed in Christianity or no, . . . to whom at some crisis of their lives the record of St. Paul's deliverance has come as life from the dead. The account of his case is also the account of theirs."

But here again the *Pauline type of experience probably only came to a few.* It needs moral genius, moral passion, to realise an experience such as is described in the seventh chapter of Romans; and we cannot attribute these high qualities to most of the Christians of the first century.

And yet all of them realised that the Christian faith brought a new moral power into their lives, and made it possible for them to win the victory in the fight for virtue. It is an amazing fact that so many of the members of the Christian Church seem to have been won from the lowest depths of degradation, and were like "brands snatched from the burning." In 1 Corinthians vi., after giving a list of the worst vices and sins of pagan society—vices for which we may be thankful that there is no equivalent word in the English language—Paul adds the words: "Such were some of you. But ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God." Christianity showed itself capable of taking up the "broken earthenware," to use Harold Begbie's descriptive phrase, of Corinth and Rome and the other cities of the ancient world, and transforming them into "vessels fit for the Master's use." Never before in the history of the human race had there been such an exhibition of redemptive power. Never before had the attempt been made to create a holy society such as the Christian Church was in idea (though it fell far short of the dreams of its founders) out of such unpromising raw material as came to the hand of Paul and his fellow-workers. When Plato set out to form his ideal Republic on paper, he made a most careful selection of his citizens and subjected them to a long course of education before he deemed them fit to play any part in his Utopia. Paul, on the other hand, had to work largely with broken earthenware, and it was only the dynamic of the redemptive grace of God in Jesus Christ which made the miracle of the Christian Church possible at all.

But whatever form the conversion assumed, whether it was mainly intellectual or mainly moral, whether it was the culmination of a moral quest or an abrupt rescue from a life of vice and sin, there was one experience that was common to all the different types. The change wrought in the man's life was so radical that it can only

be described as revolutionary. 'If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." The former self, "the old man," to use Paul's term, has been cast aside, and a new self, "the new man," has been assumed. The convert has passed into a new realm of life. He has been "transformed by the renewing of his mind"; he has been translated "from darkness unto light" and from "the power of Satan unto God." The old life of impurity and impurity and unrighteousness, of idolatry, hatred and strife, of malice and drunkenness, has been changed into a life of love, joy, peace, goodness, kindliness, faith, meekness and self-restraint. The whole nature has been illuminated and changed by a Divine power. Such, then, are some of the most notable characteristics of the religious experience of the Christian converts of the first century.

The possibility of such an experience rests upon certain *postulates* which are needed for its explanation, and without which it becomes inexplicable.

The Postulates of Christian Experience

§ 6. The first postulate assumes the necessity and reality of the Christian facts. If the mythical theory of the origin of Christianity were true, Christian experience would be absolutely unintelligible. Many attempts have been and are still being made to divorce the Pauline faith from the original Christian facts. It is often argued that Paul and not Jesus is the real founder of Christianity. But if one thing is clear in the Epistles, it is that the underlying basis and foundation of the faith of the Church is to be found in the life, teaching and death of the historical Jesus. It is true, of course, that there is very little reference in the Epistles of Paul to the events in the life of Jesus: but the historical facts are the assumption upon which the fabric of his teaching is built. Without a real Jesus, a real crucifixion and a real resurrection,

the heart is torn out of Paulinism, and it is left headless and lifeless. Without Christ behind it, it is an unsubstantial fiction, a distortion of the imagination. Without Christ, Paul's faith is vain and his preaching is vain. He is the victim of misleading emotions, very fine and very spiritual possibly, but entirely self-created, and therefore answering to no real facts.

The reality of the experience points to the reality of the facts upon which the experience rests. The latter can only be challenged by challenging the former. It is open, of course, to anyone to argue that the early Christians were subject to delusions, and that their so-called experience is due to some phase of mental aberration. The only test which we possess for appraising the value of religious experience is to be found in the results which it produces. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And when we try to tabulate the facts—the fact of the Christian Church itself and the marvellous achievements of its missionary enterprise, the fact of the new spirit and temper which came into the lives of men, expelling the exclusiveness of Judaism and the idolatry and vice of paganism, the fact of the new serenity and the new confidence which inspired their souls, the fact of the new courage and heroism and sense of triumph which filled their minds and enabled them to endure every form of hardship gladly and to face the fiery furnace of persecution without flinching, the fact of the new and loftier moral ideal which lifted mankind far above the highest teaching of the past—when we tabulate these facts, it becomes impossible for us to doubt that they spring out of a genuine religious experience; and if the experience is genuine, the facts which lie behind the experience must be genuine too.

§ 7. The second postulate needed to explain the experience is the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. Christianity is something more than a hero-worship. It is not merely the perpetuation of a great memory. It is

not simply reverence for a transcendent figure in human history. It is a relation to and a life of fellowship with a Christ who is "alive for evermore." The "Christ-mysticism" rests on the assumption of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. It does not settle, of course, the critical problems that surround the resurrection narratives in the Gospels; it does not, by itself, decide the vexed question whether in its mode the resurrection of Jesus was physical or spiritual; it does not bind us to accept any particular details of the story as it has come down to us; but it does make it necessary for us to believe that after death Christ became a living spirit, acting directly upon the minds of men, making His presence felt in their lives, directing and shaping the programme of His Church, using it as His instrument for the conversion of the world.

§ 8. The third postulate which is also needed to explain the experience is that out of Christ there flowed a new moral energy such as the world had never experienced before, which made moral achievement more possible than it had ever been in the past. By the power of Christ, men's lives "were touched to finer issues." Victory in the fight for virtue became more easily attainable. The moral demands of Jesus were higher than any that had ever been made of men before; and yet with the higher demands there came a moral dynamic which enabled them to be realised. Moreover, the old feeling of moral impotence, and the old sense that a man's failures and sins stood as an impassable barrier between him and God, was overcome by the conviction not only that Christ was "the power of God unto righteousness," but that He was also the mediator between man and God, and therefore the author of his salvation. Christ became the guarantee of the Divine forgiveness and the source of moral strength. It is not too much to say that Christ changed the balance of forces in the moral struggle. He made possible what for the mass of men was almost an impossibility before He came. Aristotle at the commencement of his *Ethics* feels

himself bound to make the admission that a man who was still the slave of passion would listen to his arguments in vain and derive no profit from them. That was an admission that Christ never had to make. On the contrary He says, "I am come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and the experience of the Apostolic Age proved a demonstration that He was "able to save to the uttermost."

Indeed it was the all-sufficiency of Christ's spiritual *power*—a term which emerges triumphantly everywhere in the record of Christian experience in the Apostolic Age, *power* to transform sinful humanity, in whatever state of moral bondage, mental darkness, or alienation from the life of God by pride and egoism, it might be found—that was the chief source of men's "glorying in Christ."

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III

The Explanations of Christian Experience

§ 9. *The central problem.*

The religious experience which we have described, and the postulates upon which it was based, inevitably raised for the early Church the problem of the person of Christ. Men who had experienced the power of Christ in their lives, as the early Christians had, men who felt that their whole careers were under His sway, who recognised the tremendous influence which He exercised over them, who felt themselves constrained by His will and purpose, who knew that they were no longer their own but belonged in some mysterious way to Him, because He had transformed their lives and given them a faith which had exercised so potent an effect upon them—men who had felt and realised all this, could not avoid asking the question, "Who is this man who has won our homage and become so much to us?" The New Testament, therefore, is something more than the record of religious experience of the early

Christians; it is an attempt also to find the explanation of that experience and to discover the formula for the interpretation of Jesus Christ.

To find the formula for personality is always the most difficult of intellectual problems. It is comparatively easy to find a definition for things; at least it is not difficult to analyse them into their components. But when we are dealing with personalities, the task is infinitely greater. Let anyone who doubts the difficulty attempt to find a formula for Sophocles or Plato, for instance, or for Paul or Augustine, Shakespeare or Goethe, Napoleon or Gladstone, a formula which shall not exceed in length the Christological clauses of the Nicene Creed, and yet shall fittingly describe the genius of these men, the place they filled, and the work they did, and shall incidentally distinguish them from all their compeers in the same sphere of activity. Moreover, when the subject of definition is not merely Jesus of Nazareth but the Christ of experience as well, it is no wonder that the task has baffled the best brains and the finest intellects in Christendom throughout the centuries. We are, of course, only concerned in this chapter with the attempts that were made in the Apostolic Age, and to begin with we may make one or two general statements about the process and the method.

In the first place, it was universally recognised that a very real problem existed for mind and thought. Those of the contemporaries of Jesus who really knew Him and His life story were unanimous in their conviction that He could not be described and interpreted in the ordinary terms and categories used for other men. Words like Prophet and Rabbi were quite inadequate for describing the feeling that Jesus aroused towards Himself. It is quite likely that the later sect of the Ebionites (though even here we cannot be quite certain) contented themselves with ordinary human terminology: but if they did, they are the exception to the otherwise unanimous belief of His followers.

Secondly, since the ordinary terms were regarded as insufficient, the thought of the Apostolic Age in its attempt to solve the problem was driven back upon such superhuman categories as existed in current religious and philosophical thought. Christianity did not bring with it into the world a divinely ordained and prepared interpretation. The day is gone by when it was possible to regard the statements of the Epistles or the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel as divinely inspired definitions of the Person of Christ. We need not deny, of course, that the theological language of the Old Testament, and especially the ideas which were evolved in the "Wisdom" literature and in the development of Apocalyptic, were part of the Divine *Præparatio Evangelica,* any more than we ought to deny that the whole course of Greek philosophy and the highest truths in the beliefs of the Mystery Cults were also part of a like *Præparatio.* But we have no right to assert that any particular set of terms in this great legacy from the past was specially intended as an inspired vehicle for the interpretation of the Christian Faith. A newly discovered fact in the realm of science can, at first, only be described in terms already known, and the same is true in the realm of history. Paul and the thinkers of the first century, in their attempt to find an interpretation of Jesus, were compelled to use the terms which had already been invented for the use of religion and philosophy, and so lay ready to hand. They were forced to speak in the current language of their time. What else could they do? What else can any of us do even to-day? It is in no sense of the term derogatory to Christianity, if the modern Historic-Critical School is right in maintaining that much of the nomenclature and some even of the ideas used in early Christian theology are derived from a pagan source. It only means that these early Christians were so overwhelmed and so overawed by their experience of Christ as to feel that none but the highest available thought-forms anywhere to be found were adequate for expressing all that Christ had become to them,

and all that He meant for their lives. The Christian Faith is not destroyed, as so many think, if it is proved that much of "pagan" thought and terminology passed into its theology, and it is not worth the expenditure of a single argument or a single drop of ink for us to attempt to deny or minimise the influence that came into Christian thought from external sources. The greatness of the Christian faith is enhanced rather than diminished by the fact that its earliest thinkers were compelled to draw upon the best terminology in current religious and philosophical thought in their quest for terms which might prove adequate for the interpretation of their religious experience and the creative source of that personal experience. It will be impossible here to do more than sketch in briefest outline the different attempts which were made in the Apostolic Age to find the best formula for the interpretation of Jesus.

§ 10. *The earliest Christian creed.*

Christianity began with the very simple creed, "Jesus is the Messiah," and a variant of this, which, though it originated in Jewish circles, became the most common formula in the Gentile Churches—"Jesus is Lord." Both these phrases indicate that from the first it was felt that only an extraordinary term was sufficient to express the faith of the Church in Christ. But ere long these simple formulæ proved to be inadequate. Both titles were ambiguous and of doubtful connotation. In the *Psalms of Solomon* the term "Messiah" is applied to a great human leader, who comes from the lineage of David and establishes a mighty Kingdom. In the *Book of Enoch,* on the other hand, it is applied to a Divine Being who is seen in vision as seated on the heavenly throne by the side of the Ancient of Days. The term "Lord," too, was used in the Septuagint to translate the sacred and unutterable name of God, while in common speech it was commonly used by an inferior in addressing his superior officer or master. We cannot be sure of the exact sense on which

these terms were used among the earliest Christians. Probably they were rather differently interpreted by different people. As they were used by the general body of Christians, the connotation given to them must have been greater than their lowest possible meaning, and probably was less than their highest possible meaning. As elsewhere in religion, action preceded reflective thought in the history of the Christian Church; and the first generation of believers was too much absorbed in practical matters to have time for speculative analysis.

From the speeches of Peter in the Acts (if we are to trust their historicity, and there seems to be good grounds for believing that they are not entirely the composition of a later historian), it seems clear that the Apostles at first believed that Jesus was a man who was proved by His miracles of healing to have come from God, and who was raised by God to the rank of divinity. "Let the whole house of Israel assuredly know that God hath made him both Lord and Messiah" (Acts ii. 36). It must be remembered, however, that words like these, embodying as they do the theory of adoptive sonship, as it was termed in later times, represent only the first crude opinion and not the final judgment of the Church. And there is no good reason why we should attach paramount importance to the first utterances of the disciples of Jesus and regard their first thoughts as of more importance than the considered judgments which they expressed later on. We must never forget that the first opinions were expressed without the rich and varied religious experience which made the later Christology possible, and in fact necessary, to their minds.

§ 11. *The Creed in the Benediction.*

We have not sufficient data to trace with anything like precision the development of the interpretation of Jesus in the first Christian generation. For the first twenty years the only information available is to be found in the opening chapters of Acts, and the historian is there more

concerned with external facts than with the progress of Christian thought. "Christianity," it has been said, "entered a tunnel, after the day of Pentecost, from which it did not emerge into the clear light of day till we reach the Epistles of St. Paul." While it was in the tunnel there were only a few scattered gleams of light that illumine the darkness, and none of them shed any radiance on our inquiry. It was during this time that the first great rapture of the new Christian experience came fully home to the Church, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find that the interpretation of Christ is richer and fuller at the end of this period than it was before.

It seems, however, quite certain that by the time the Apostle Paul wrote the second Epistle to the Corinthians, Jesus had to him the value of God: for in the benediction at its close, Christ is co-ordinated with God and with the Holy Spirit. Christian adoration had found expression in the great devotional formula, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." It has been sometimes argued that Paul was influenced in this matter by the *Book of Wisdom,* which in a similar manner associates "the Logos" and "Wisdom" with God in a quasi-Trinitarian statement. But allowing for the fact that the Benediction of Paul may be modelled on a similar conjunction of Divine Beings, or rather attributes or functions, in the *Book of Wisdom,* there is yet a previous question which has to be asked and answered. It is this. Why did Paul assign to Jesus the place which had been given to Wisdom or the Logos in the higher theological speculation of Judaism? What was there in Jesus that led to His identification with the great philosophical ideas of Jewish thought? The answer surely must be that Paul would never have assigned to Jesus a place in the Benediction and given Him rank with God and the Holy Spirit, unless the spiritual influence which Jesus had exercised upon his life had been analogous to the influences which had hitherto been associated with God and the Holy Spirit.

§ 12. *The later Pauline explanations.*

If the first stage in the rise of Christology shows the development of a first simple creed into the statement of the Benediction, the second stage is an equally important moment in Christian thought; for it exhibits the development of the Benediction into the cosmic conception of Christ in the Epistle to the Colossians. "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures, for by him were all things made, in heaven and on earth; . . . all things were made through him and unto him, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

The importance of this statement cannot be exaggerated. It is one of the most daring leaps of imagination that have ever been made by the mind of man. It is the intellectual miracle of the Apostolic Age. Only thirty years before it had been written Jesus had been crucified by Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem; and here is the Apostle Paul identifying the crucified Nazarene with the Divine Creative idea and principle of the universe. It was in and through Him that God had first created the universe of angels and men and things, it was through Him that He still maintained it in existence, and it was He who was the final consummation towards which the whole creation moves (1 Cor. i. 15; cf. Eph. i. 10).

Can such a statement as this be in any way connected with Paul's religious experience? It is often asserted that Paul took such ideas either from the conception of Wisdom in Jewish thought (with which he was certainly familiar in the *Book of Wisdom,* which he used in writing his Epistle to the Romans), or else from the Hermetic literature. But once again there is a previous question: "What led Paul to associate these ideas with Jesus Christ? Why did Jesus become for him the centre of the cosmic system?" The only answer to such questions is that Jesus had become so much to Paul in his religious experience, that these lofty ideas naturally grouped themselves about His person, and seemed to Paul the only terms that were

adequate for His interpretation. It would have been as incongruous to Paul as it is to us to use this language of an ordinary human religious leader; it was because Jesus had become to St. Paul so much more than that, that the language appeared to be appropriate. It seems, moreover, to have been recognised by the whole Church to be appropriate; since, as far as we know, Paul's Christology was not challenged at the time, and later on it received the *imprimatur* of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

But is it possible to trace any real point of contact between Paul's experience and the Colossian statement? Can we trace a psychological development of the cosmic conception of Christ in the working of Paul's mind? It certainly was not due to a sudden flash of insight or a sudden miracle of imagination. The idea seems to have been slowly growing in Paul's thought for many years, since it was adumbrated in the language which he uses about Christ in 1 Corinthians viii. 6. "One Lord Jesus Christ, *through whom are all things,* and we through him." The Colossian statement is, as we should naturally expect, fuller and more complete, but the germ of the idea is certainly found in the phrase used in 1 Corinthians.

The point of contact between Paul's experience and his cosmic theory of Christ seems to lie in the Christ-mysticism of the Apostle. Paul was convinced by what had happened in his own soul that Christ was alive for evermore. That was the fundamental fact which constituted his starting-point. Then, unconsciously reversing the argument for the soul's immortality which Plato used in the *Phaedo,* Paul seems to have felt instinctively (and here again there were movements in later Hellenistic thought which may have reinforced his conviction) that the survival of Christ and His conquest of death implied His pre-existence. Plato had argued from the present nature of the soul to its pre-existence, and from this again to its post-existence after death. Paul argued, or rather leapt instinctively to the conclusion, that Christ's post-

existence involved His pre-existence. And as Christ had become the centre of Paul's own life, nay more, had come to fill the whole range of his moral universe, he seems to have drawn the conclusion that He must have been the centre of the life of the universe from the very first. Judged by the standards of logic, the argument is illicit, because it bases a cosmic philosophy on a moral experience. And yet, as Sorley has recently taught us, the two fields cannot be really kept apart. For when we have found the ultimate moral reality—and rightly or wrongly Paul was sure that he had found this in Christ—we have inevitably found something more as well, unless we are prepared to acquiesce in a final metaphysical dualism. In the last resort cosmic reality and moral reality must live in the same house and be children of the same father.

With the Colossian statement Christology definitely entered the region of philosophy. The supreme creative moment in the development of New Testament Christology had arrived. If once the position reached by Paul in this passage is granted, it is only a question of time for the doctrine in the Nicene Creed to be attained. But whether this position had been reached by Paul or not, it was bound to be reached some time or other: for there is no escape from the ultimate problem of philosophy when we have to deal with the intellectual problems connected with the Person of Christ.

§ 13. *The Epistle to the Hebrews.*

The later Christology of the New Testament builds on the position reached by Paul. Only two aspects of it need to be considered here and now. The one is to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the other in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The significance of the former lies in the fact that it introduces the special terms of the Platonic philosophy in its interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ. According to the Platonic theory of Ideas everything on earth is an imperfect copy of a heavenly archetype. The writer of Hebrews assumes that

religion must necessarily have a high-priest, a sacrificial system and a sanctuary; but he argues that these institutions as we find them in the Old Testament are only the shadows and copies of the heavenly realities, and therefore necessarily imperfect and inadequate for the purpose for which they were created. In the person of Jesus Christ, the heavenly realities themselves broke out of eternity into the realm of time, and Jesus became the ideal High-priest, who offered the ideal sacrifice in the ideal temple. It is thus in the Epistle to the Hebrews that philosophy for the first time is explicitly pressed into the service of Christian experience to elucidate and define the Christian faith.

§ 14. *The Fourth Gospel explanation.*

The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel represents a still more important and influential attempt to explain the position reached by Paul in Colossians, in the terms of religious philosophy. The source from which the author derived his conception of the *Logos* has long been a matter of dispute. But while at one time it was considered a vital matter to the Christian apologist to prove that the idea could not have been derived from the writings of Philo, for us to-day the question of its origin is a matter of mere academic interest. It would be interesting enough for us if we could tell for certain whether Rendel Harris is right in arguing that all the ideas of the Prologue might have been and probably were derived from Jewish "Word" and "Wisdom" thought; or whether others are more correct in assuming that the writer was also dependent on Philo; or whether it is not more probable that the Prologue fastens upon an idea which was a popular category of thought at the time, since it is found in many types of philosophy current for the first century. But, after all, no important issue for our inquiry is involved in the discussion. It is sufficient for us to recognise that the writer of the Prologue seized upon the conception of the Logos from some source or other, and employed it in working

out a mystico-philosophical interpretation of the Person of Christ. The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is simply the Colossian statement of Paul translated into the terms of the highest current religious philosophy of the time.

§ 15. The Conclusions to which our discussion has led us may be summarised as follows:—

(1) The problem has been to show how the first simple creed "Jesus is the Christ" developed first of all into the Pauline Benediction, then into the Christology of Colossians, and finally into the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel.

(2) There were three factors which governed the development: (*a*) the original "fact of Christ"; (*b*) the rich Christian experience of the first generation of believers; (*c*) the current religious and philosophical ideas. Of these three it is the second that proved to be the most potent element in the progress of interpretation. It can be proved that every momentous step forward that was taken was the corollary or rational expression of religious experience.

(3) In interpreting this experience, the thinkers of the early Church were bound to use the terms and ideas which were in common usage at the time; and they ransacked the language of religion and philosophy to find categories adequate for the purpose.

(4) Their religious faith and experience led them to the conviction that none but the highest terms available were adequate for the interpretation of Christ.

(5) This conviction constituted the great legacy which the New Testament has handed down to us to-day.

We are not bound by the terms it used. The philosophy of the first century is largely out of date to-day, and its phraseology has lost much of its value. Only an expert

in ancient philosophy can really understand the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. But though we are not bound by the terms these early Christians used, we are bound by the spirit of their quest. Their quest was to find in the language available in their day terms adequate to express their experience of Christ. That is our quest also; and if our experience of Christ is at all akin to theirs, we shall inevitably reach their conclusions too, that only the highest categories we can discover will serve our need and suffice us for the interpretation of Christ.

PART III
CHRIST IN THEOLOGY

CHAPTER V
THE MEANING AND TASK OF CHRISTOLOGY

J. Vernon Bartlet

"Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon."—St. Paul, I Cor. iii. 11, 10.

"For we know in part, and we tell forth in part."

I Cor. xiii. 9.

SYNOPSIS

The Church's reflective witness to Christ needs to be interpreted in the light of three main considerations.

I. The Element of Symbolism in all Religious Thinking.

Theology, like all reflective thought, can only express the truth with which it deals in approximate and symbolic terms. The terms may therefore vary without invalidating the truth they enshrine. Thus Christian thought makes use first of Hebraic imagery and then of Greek philosophy to describe its Lord.

II. The Relative and Progressive Character of Christology.

This is evident in (*a*) the variety of the Church's intellectual witness, both in the New Testament and onwards; and (*b*) the varied forms of the Apostolic witness to Christ, and the unresolved issues it left over for the later Church.

III. Christian Thought and Experience 'Sub-Apostolic' in the Post-Apostolic Age.

In the formative period, when the Church's Christology really began to take shape, experience of Christ was still very real and potent. His Divine Lordship pervades early hymns—the primitive form of faith's confession. Yet the historic personality of Christ was little realised, owing largely to Hellenistic mentality replacing Hebraic. On the other hand, the categories of Hebraism were unequal to the task of interpreting the full Christian experience of Jesus' Lordship.

In all circles, however, the highest categories available were always used, even to the point of obscuring Christ's true humanity. In particular, the Logos idea was adopted from Greek philosophy and re-adapted, but no longer in the semi-Hebraic form of the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER V

THE MEANING AND TASK OF CHRISTOLOGY

CHRIST reaches men to-day through the witness of the Church. Indeed the Church, for our present purpose, is just the sum total of such witness. But this witness has differed not a little in form at different times, particularly as regards its more reflective aspects. In order to see aright the meaning of this fact, we must reckon with a principle governing the expression of all spiritual experience.

I

SYMBOLISM IN RELIGIOUS THINKING

The fact that the intellectual forms under which Jesus has been apprehended by Christian experience have varied, at different times and places, surely proves that such forms are only relatively true to the full "fact of Christ." On the other hand, the variety in question does not in itself compromise the reality of the idea of a unique Incarnation of God in Jesus the Christ, from which the varying conceptions have alike started, as a truth given in immediate religious experience. Rather such variety does but make more impressive the unity in underlying idea, just as in the case of the theistic idea, which the comparative study of religions has now made known in the wide range of its diversity and also in its universal presence in humanity. In both cases the fact that the idea in its history outgrows and throws off one conceptual form after another, as inadequate to its inherent nature, points strongly to its inherent vitality and its correspondence with ultimate Reality. Yet in Christology, as in theology in the above sense, there

remains a falling short of the full truth, due not only to imperfect understanding of the historic Jesus, but also to inadequacy of analysis in terms of abstract or philosophic concepts.

This, however, is not a limitation peculiar to religion. It is a law of all reflective thought, in dealing with anything beyond the quantitative, as has recently been pointed out by Canon Streeter and others. Life on all its levels, both physical and spiritual, can be thought out and stated only in approximate or symbolic terms. These suggest rather than define, partly revealing and partly only hinting the full truth or reality. All distinctively human or spiritual facts and values—the Good, the Beautiful, the rationally True—and not only the religious as such, are specially subject to this law of symbolism. There are, moreover, two types of symbols, the poetic and the philosophic; and in living experience religious ideas have ever been and still are best grasped as set forth in the concrete, frankly figurative symbolism of poetry, rather than in the abstract symbolic conceptions of philosophy. Philosophy aims at exactitude even in regions where it can never be fully reached; while theology, including Christology, is religious experience in terms of philosophy, whether popular or technical. Yet the aim is not wholly fruitless either in philosophy or theology; and at any rate it furnishes safeguards against the cruder manner in which the imaginative or poetic type of symbolism is all too apt to be taken. The two are mutually supplemental, the Church's hymns and her dogmatic theories; and none can tell how near to a full apprehension of Christ the two methods of thought and expression may not one day bring men.

This principle of the approximate or relative, rather than absolute, nature of any intellectual interpretation of the Person of Christ, whether that of Apostles or of the Church at large in its corporate definitions, cannot be set aside by invoking the principle of special inspiration. The

characteristic result of this is intuition or direct spiritual perception, as in Peter's inspired recognition of the Christhood of Jesus, not reflective definition. The latter is the task proper to man's own thinking, which, while enhanced in insight by Divine inspiration, depends also on the whole body of experience gathered and co-ordinated by ordinary mental processes. This is a fact of the more moment that the total range of experience and knowledge in the age of greatest inspiration, the Apostolic, was immeasurably more limited than to-day.

The first and most obvious application of this principle of "symbolism" or figurative thinking is to the New Testament Apocalyptic and Eschatology. It is clear that Christians originally saw Jesus in the setting afforded by certain forms in which the pious Jewish imagination had clothed the coming of "the Christ" God's true Anointed. He was to be primarily Israel's King, though extending God's rule so as to include all nations; and the kingdom of God He was to inaugurate, was to be set up visibly, even spectacularly, by a sudden and complete change both in moral conditions and in Nature. This imaginative programme, which, according to primitive Christian faith, Jesus was to fulfil before the first generation "tasted death," was never literally fulfilled. It simply faded, and its essential ideas took on fresh forms, also more or less symbolic and only partly fulfilled. But the great and truly Divine thing in the matter was the *kind* of personality to whom Christian faith had come to attach these traditional forms, which, however inadequate in fact, were yet the highest on their horizon. For in His intrinsic religious character and methods of bringing about the Messianic Kingdom, Jesus, the Son of Man, the Crucified, presented most striking contrasts to the central Figure of tradition. Accordingly "the fact of Christ" showed its Divine or superhuman nature the more clearly, that it created and sustained in humanity a faith in Jesus as the Christ simply *on His own personal merits.* These were really new in

idea, as in dynamic effect; and the ideal truth of His personality began at once to throw off, like a living bulb its outgrown sheath, the first of the many relative or human conceptions of it which, while necessary to a given stage of its unfolding, have later proved inadequate.

The same holds good also of all the more abstract or intellectual interpretations of the fact of Christ. The New Testament passages which most embody the new and distinctive revelation of God "in the face of Jesus Christ" are those which equate the "life of God" as essentially "love," with the life and love manifest in Jesus Christ. "God," says Paul, "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" by "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Similarly, the first Epistle of John announces that "the Life was manifested, . . . the Life eternal which was in communion with the Father, and hath been manifested to us." "This life is in his Son," and its essence is self-giving Love; so "every one that loveth is begotten of God and has experimental knowledge of God . . .; for God is Love." Here the essential idea is that there is a Life of identical quality in "the Father" and in "His Son Jesus Christ," a life truly Divine yet shared by Christians. That "life" had been "with the Father" before it was manifested in Jesus Christ. How this was so, is put more speculatively by Paul in Phil. ii., where he speaks of Christ Jesus as "being originally in the form (or state) of Godhood," ere by an act of self-abnegating love He passed into that of manhood for redemptive ends. It was an act of transcendent moral greatness, because of love—one which reached its climax in Christ's willing acceptance of the Cross as the final Cup of self-humbling and suffering, held out by the father's hand as needful for human salvation.

This is *religiously* a sublime interpretation of the moral personality of Christ; and it witnesses to the unique impression made by the historical Jesus on Christian

experience. It caused Paul to strain the conceptions of Hebrew religion almost to breaking point, by picturing the Incarnation of an archangelic [1] type of being—God's very Image—all but "equal with God," in order to explain his sense of worshipful homage to Jesus as verily God's unique Son. But the form of this conception could not permanently satisfy the Christian consciousness. For, in not representing the Divine element in Christ's person as coming straight *from within* the Godhead proper, it has not only a speculative or philosophic defect—natural enough to the Hebrew concrete mode of thought and symbolism—but also a grave drawback religiously, when fully thought out. It fails to carry back the spring of salvation right up into the being of Deity in itself.

It was to remedy this relative defect in conception, once it was discovered, that later Christian reflection toiled so earnestly—before, during, and after the fourth century. For Christian experience was sure, as Athanasius insisted, that the Life it had received through Christ was fully Divine, and that it united men to God absolutely. Hence once the question had been raised, it could not permanently tolerate any conception of Christ's Divine nature having pre-existed other than "in God." [2] The monotheism of the Apostles was too strongly of the Hebraic type—its whole emphasis being on the Divine nature as will—to allow them thus early to conceive the possibility of a diversity of elements (all "personal" in a sense) as together constituting the complex unity of

[1] The pre-existent person to whom equality with God might seem an object of ambition, is conceived to be God's "Son," as sharing God's nature by direct derivation from Him (unlike all creation, which had its being through that Son, as the Image of God), yet to be distinct from God as a person, a centre of self-conscious purpose.

[2] Not even the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel goes beyond asserting that "in the beginning the Word was with (in communion with, *pros*) God, and was God," Divine in quality—having "all the fulness of deity," in Paul's phrase (Col. ii. 9, cf. 3, and Eph. iii. 19). The final question involved in such an essential *homogeneity of personal life* (as love) in God and His Christ as Paul, Hebrews, and the Johannine Epistle and Gospel, all in varying terms assert, was not before the Christian consciousness in the Apostolic Age.

the Divine life, somewhat as in the case of the human soul. It was here that real advance on Apostolic thought was possible, and in some few finely balanced minds was actually attained, though the average "orthodox" believer tended to fall over into the opposite danger of tri-theism.

Towards the solution of the other problem left over by the Apostolic witness to the personality in Christ as essentially Divine in quality, viz., how to provide for the real humanity of that personality, advance in "orthodox" circles was less clear, as we shall yet see. The main cause of this—paradoxically, yet naturally, when we look closer into it—was just that abstract mode of thought and symbolism which was a help to the solution of the other problem, tri-unity of personal life in one God. For here it led to a wrong method of approach. The ancient Church conceived the unity of Christ's historical personality not psychologically, as a living fact of moral experience to start with, but rather as an intellectual synthesis of two abstract conceptions, Divine "nature" and human "nature." These were viewed as "essences" or "substances" (reached by stripping away the qualities common to both, so reducing each to *that in which they now stood contrasted*)[1] rather than as subjects of self-conscious life. Having thus artificially put them apart in idea, the wit of man could not bring them into the living unity in which they had been presented in Christ. A truer method was needed, and a new notion of personality—one indeed largely created in men's minds by the very influence of Christ on them.

II

Christology: Relative and Progressive

The historic Jesus, the foundation of all that is distinctive in Christianity, had two aspects. He was a Jew of the first century; but the further and stupendous fact that we add *Anno Domini,* to describe that century's place

in time, expresses the witness of History itself to the super-historical and super-temporal nature of His personality. During Jesus' earthly intercourse with His disciples, the former side of His person overshadowed and obscured the other. They knew Him "after the flesh," externally, superficially, imperfectly. As with ordinary friendships, however, separation by death brought deeper insight. That is the meaning of the words, "it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Upholder (the Paraclete, the Divine Spirit in the form of Christ) will not come unto you" (John xvi. 7, 14): and again "I come unto you" (xiv. 18). Here we have the inner significance of Apostolic Christology, as traced in the foregoing chapter. It expresses both deepening experience of Christ and more reflective interpretation. The like is true in essence of the Church's witness all down the ages, whereby the potentialities of Christ's personality have been gradually making themselves manifest on a world-scale. Thus, in its effect, the transcendent nature of the cause has become more clear than it could be at first. But, as in Apostolic Christianity, so throughout the whole Church's witness, only the highest terms have been felt to befit Jesus the Christ.

That the Apostolic interpretation of Christ was itself not uniform in conception is a fact of prime moment. For if it is assumed that the Church, in virtue of the special inspiration of Apostolic founders, possessed from the first a final doctrine of His Person, the story of the gradual and often troubled development of its Christology must seem without positive reason or value, due merely to human frailty or perversity. This we believe to be very far from the truth. On the contrary, there has been real progress in the interpretation of Christ's person, largely because of progress in Christian philosophy. For "there is no revealed philosophy";[1] and Christology,

[1] As Dr. W. R. Matthews says in *The Future of Christianity* (p. 106), and as Dr. Hatch in his "Hibbert Lectures" urged long ago.

like other parts of theology, is dependent on current conceptions of a philosophic order for the degree to which it is able at any time to express what the Church realises touching the Christ of history and Christian experience.

The thought-form most characteristic of Christ, both in His life and teaching, is moral personality; and it was one shared by the Apostles, as men already prepared by the kindred religion of the Hebrew prophets and psalmists. When, therefore, their thought was faced with the task of explaining Jesus' unique personality in terms of His relation of God, the very vividness of the Hebraic idea of personality created a special difficulty for them as Hebrew monotheists. The solution, as we saw, was sought on two distinct lines. The original Apostles, to judge from their spokesman, Peter, in Acts, viewed the relation of Jesus to God simply on the lines of Hebrew Messiahship. But in Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Fourth Gospel, another mode of interpretation appears: in Jesus, a pre-existent, personal being, distinct from God, though sharing His nature completely (His Image or Glory or Word), had "become flesh," or human. The exact sources of such a conception, in its several forms, are not quite clear. Doubtless it existed in Rabbinic Judaism,[1] as contrasted with Biblical Hebraism, but was thought to be implied in Old Testament Scripture itself, particularly the story of Creation.[2] In any case it is surely true to say [3] that to Paul "Christ is from the beginning to end a fully personal being," distinct from God, not "a hypostasis (distinct mode of being) in the divine substance" or Godhead. The latter idea "lies outside the Apostle's horizon." And the same is true in substance of the Fourth Evangelist, to whom the Logos was "with God," "in fellowship with (*pros*) God," and qualitatively Divine ("God"), yet not "in God" as a mode of His very being. In all this the Christian

[1] See Note A at end of chapter, p. 134.
[2] See Note B at end of chapter, p. 134.
[3] With Dr. W. Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul,* pp. 64, *seq.*

attitude to Jesus is unmistakable. Religiously God and Christ were "set side by side as two great objects of faith and worship." But as yet there was no uniform theory of their relation. Christian thought had not fully grappled with the first great problem which the fact of Christ raises, viz., how He stands to the Eternal God; while the other great problem, *the relation of the Divine element in Him to the human*—especially as to knowledge, will, and self-consciousness—had hardly dawned on the Apostolic horizon. To overlook or minimise the fresh problems which enlarging Christian experience and reflection have gradually brought to light after the Apostles' day, is to minimise both the fact and the abiding need of providential progress in Christian thought, as distinct from inspired religious intuition, the Spirit-gift proper to Apostleship.[1] Theoretic "knowledge" came only "in part" even to Apostles;[2] so that increasing adequacy in Christology is to be looked for as the result of the ordinary processes of thought (which theology shares with philosophy and physical science), operating in the Church's God-given experience of Christ all down its history.

Nor are such questions matters only of theoretic interest. Had Christian thought faltered at the beginning in making its unique claim for Christ in such terms as were ready to hand, it is improbable that Christianity would have survived as a world-religion. Nevertheless,

[1] Dr. Gore seems to overlook this, *e.g.*, in his address at Lausanne on "The Church's Common Confession of Faith." For there, besides ignoring the pre-Pauline type of Christology represented by Peter, he asserts that "the doctrine of St. Paul and St. John, given under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ"—a too sweeping phrase, when used to cover both the religious intuition of faith and its reflective expression in terms of current categories—is simply the doctrine "made explicit" in the original Nicene Creed. Surely this is less than just to the *metaphysical* advance in the theory of Godhead implied by the latter.

[2] Paul's contrast between Christ as the once-for-all laid foundation of religious faith, and the conceptual structure of doctrine built thereon, with materials of varying value, by Christian teachers (including Apollos and himself), applies to Christology as well as other forms of Christian theory (*gnosis or epignosis*).

right or wrong interpretation of the way in which the Divine and the human mingled in His nature may determine whether or not we can find in Him the solution to our own human problem. This is, at bottom, the practical problem of moral freedom, the conditions of victory over all that frustrates human aspiration after perfect life and the satisfaction which is its fruit and sign. May it not be that the relative failure of Christians to "follow" Christ has been due in part to imperfect reflection on the nature of that Sonship which He ever calls them to share with Him? In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus never suggests that His relations to God were not analogous, in their essential nature and conditions, with those proper to man as he should be, however different the degree of Divine knowledge and authority of which He was conscious. The Church's efforts, therefore, to attain a Christology progressively more adequate to its developing needs, both for thought and conduct, constitute a subject which concerns us closely to-day.

III

Christian Thought in the Post-Apostolic Age

In the preceding chapter we saw that there were three main factors governing the view of Christ which inspired Apostolic Christianity. These were: (*a*) the historical "fact of Christ"; (*b*) the personal experience it produced; and (*c*) the religious and philosophical ideas entering into reflective apprehension of its nature and meaning. These same factors govern Christianity in all stages of the Church's life, but in differing proportions at different periods. The contrast is greatest as between Apostolic Christology generally and that elaborated by the Ancient Catholic Church.[1] It is for this reason that

[1] Of this it has justly been said (Harnack, *What is Christianity*, p. 231): "In its completed forms it must look strange to anyone who comes to it straight from the Evangelists." On the other hand "historical considera-

we have set the former by itself in a special chapter. For, in Apostolic experience of Christ, insight into His historic personality, in the light of its actual psychological and moral conditions, was largely operative; whereas in post-Apostolic experience the influence of reflective Christological theory has been more determinative.

Thus far we have considered only the witness to Christ of Apostles and their associates, as reflected in the New Testament writings. Even in the Apostolic Age, however, the witness of the Church as a whole to Christ was not quite the same thing; yet it was this, especially as realised by Gentile converts, which formed the *real starting-point* of the later Church's life and witness.

At bottom, it is true, personal experience of Christ among all Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, was still of one type, in spite of differences due to race and culture: He was the Mediator of Divine Life to men who had missed their way. But as yet there was no one theory of His Person. Faith in Him was instinctive and practical: the orthodoxy of its witness was proved by loyalty to His lead in the face of all difficulties and dangers. It expressed itself in adoration in the widest sense, the singing of His worthy praise both with lip and life. Indeed, the hymns of the Church in all ages are its truest witness to Christ. In the New Testament we have not only the *Magnificat,* but also the Doxologies of the Book of Revelation to Him who had redeemed men and made them sharers in His own victories, and so "kings and priests unto God." Along with this went a vivid consciousness of His spiritual presence as their very life, and particularly as the inspirer of love in the new Christian sense—Jesus' special gift to man. Experience of His

tions enable us not only to explain its origin but also even to justify in a certain degree the way in which it is formulated." A right appreciation of this contrast, in its positive and negative aspects, is so essential to the framing of a more adequate Christology, that large space must be given to tracing the development of ancient Christology, which still dominates traditional thinking about Christ to-day.

quickening power over the soul "dead in sin" utters itself in this snatch from a hymn, probably of the Ephesian Church in Paul's day:—

> Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,
> And there shall dawn on thee the Christ.

Such was the type of hymn to which the Roman governor Pliny witnessed as being sung in Bithynia (*c.* 112) to Christ "as to a god." In a word, the Church's assured testimony [1] was "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." At the same time He had—and this was what "the Good News" meant chiefly to Gentiles—"anulled death, and illumined life and incorruption through the Gospel."

In some important respects, however, the type of faith which actually passed on from the Apostolic Age to later times was *not specifically Apostolic.* Certain elements only of its experience and witness were assimilated by the average Christian consciousness of the Church at large. Piety thus became ere long "sub-Apostolic," not only in date but in nature. The root-cause of this imperfect continuity lay in the Hebraic quality of the one, and the non-Hebraic or Hellenistic quality of the other. And since this contrast affects the Church's experience and thought throughout the whole age of the Fathers, when Catholic Christology (the parent of all later "orthodox" Christology) was framed, it is needful from the first to realise its far-reaching meaning.

Hebraism laid emphasis on will, whether in God or man, as the core of personality; and it was with personal relations that Hebrew religion more and more had to do. Such a religion of moral personality, of fellowship between God and man as in "Covenant" relations ever more deeply personal, was the very theme of Hebrew prophecy; and it was in fulfilment of such religion that Jesus came,

[1] Cited along with other "faithful maxims" in the Epistles to Timothy (I Tim. i. 15; cf. 2 Tim. ii. 11-13).

not as a mere prophet receiving occasional messages or "words" of God, but as "the Christ," *the personal embodiment* in manhood of the Divine character, and so "Emmanuel," "God with us." As we have already seen, Jesus, in a way quite unexpected by Judaism—the way of the Cross—fulfilled Christhood in a deeper and more universal sense than had been dreamt of. He thus afforded a new revelation of God as redemptive love. In Him Divine Love rose, in historic fact, to the level of the dread realism of the Cross, the vicarious suffering of the Divine nature in the filial consciousness and will of manhood. "He has reigned from the Tree." Thus Hebraic categories were both fulfilled and transcended; and so by Jesus' very life and work His disciples—in trying to give Him the place, in relation first to God and then to the Universe, which His personality seemed to imply—were compelled more and more to draw on conceptions of a type rather different from their traditional ones.

This meant that Hebrew monotheism needed a fresh and enlarged interpretation, if it was to yield an adequate explanation of the great new fact, viz., a human personality completely and abidingly interpenetrated by God's indwelling. Thus the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel—in which Hebraic religious experience and reflection blend [1] with Greek idealism in the sublimest Christian mysticism—adopts the originally Greek "Logos" idea, but readapts it, even more than Philo had done, by giving it personal being "with God," as His actual agent in creation. But this more personal sense which Christians were impelled by the historical person of Christ to give to the Logos idea [2] left over certain serious questions, which no New Testament writer seems to have realised, but which were bound ere long to emerge. What is the exact relation between the Logos and God? What, too,

[1] See Note C at end of this chapter, p. 135.

[2] This, as the Divine Reason, remains in the Old Testament impersonal, though personified in Prov. viii. 22-31, just as is God's "Holy Spirit," *e.g.*, in Isa. lxiii. 10 f.

the relation between the Logos and the humanity of Christ, in whom "the Logos became flesh," that is man? In particular, how are we to conceive of personality or self-consciousness as common to the pre-incarnate and incarnate stages and states of the Logos manifest in Christ? And what of Jesus' progressive growth "in wisdom and in favour" with God and man? In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus' filial consciousness had been connected with His prayer-life, and was associated, notably in the Temptation, with the Spirit of God as medium of His communion with God as Father. The way in which, in later Christology, frequency of reference to the Spirit (a Hebraic idea), varies inversely with the importance of the Logos category (a Greek idea) is noteworthy and hardly accidental.

As insight into the historical setting and so into the realism of the Gospel ministry faded, and with it the full meaning of many of Jesus' words and the motives of certain of His most revealing acts, the tendency increased for the Christ of reflective thought to be conformed to current "pattern ideas," due to Hellenistic religion and the general culture of the age. This applied not only to "heretical" circles, but also, if more subtly and insensibly, to "orthodox" ones. In both, as a rule, the Divinity of Christ was taken for granted, on the basis of the Gospel story and Christian experience. Such experience was of a simple, self-evidencing, religious kind, and was due largely to Christ's spiritual presence *as felt in corporate worship.* This, conceived as an outflow of His Divine Nature or Spirit—first experienced as "sealing" the believer at baptism, and then especially in the Holy Supper—was probably a powerful factor in fostering language like the following. "Jesus . . . lo! we make bold with thanksgiving and invocation of Thy holy Name. Come now and commune with us. . . . Come and commune with us in this Thanksgiving (Eucharist) which we make on the basis of Thy Name, and in the Love wherein we have assembled on the basis of Thy calling." This, though found in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (*c.* 47),

may well illustrate a not uncommon form of Christian experience of Christ as present "in Spirit," by the "holy inspiration" of His personal influence. Such feeling touching Christ, and the life received through Him, was one of utter newness. Jesus, as Ignatius put it, was "the new man," the archetype of a new humanity, and "our inseparable Life": so Irenæus (*c.* A.D. 180) exclaims: "Know that He brought all newness in bringing himself."

The danger of such an immediate or mystical experience of Christ, apart from an adequate sense of the historic Jesus of the Gospels, was to lead to affirmation of His Divinity in so unqualified a way as often to sacrifice His real humanity.[1] Some Christians even identified the Divine in Him with God absolutely. Thus a certain Nötus could ask, "What harm do I in (thus) glorifying Christ?"—by calling Him God made visible. But the general Christian sentiment uttered itself rather in Ignatius' phrase, "our God," *i.e.,* the revealed God, "the Father's Word" (Logos), or self-utterance, "come forth from (previous) silence."[2] So again, in the opening of the oldest extant sermon, we read: "Brethren, so must we think of Jesus Christ as of God, as of the Judge of living and dead." Prayer was on occasion instinctively addressed to Him in person, instead of to God the Father in His name—the more usual or reflective form, found in corporate prayers and thanksgivings. So, too, according to Hippolytus early in the third century, hymns from the first spoke of Christ in Divine terms. In fact, the real difficulty in nearly all Christian circles lay in doing justice to the humanity of the historical Jesus, whether in body or mind. Unreality (*docetism*) in one or both of these respects was the besetting tendency throughout the whole story of the Ancient Church.

[1] Cf. appended Note B, p. 134.

[2] Magn. 8; cf. Rom. viii., Jesus Christ is "the unerring mouth whereby the Father hath spoken." Similarly *The Preaching of Peter,* of about the same date, styled Christ "Law" and "Logos," *i.e.,* the fulfilment of the highest form of Divine revelation as conceived by the Jew and Greek respectively.

In the Hellenistic culture of the early Christian centuries the Greek or pure Hellenic element was only its most predominant ingredient. Religiously it was a "syncretism" or blend of a highly composite type, including a strong tincture of Oriental influences and of revived pre-Hellenic Mystery-cults, suggested by the phenomena of vegetable life. In such symbolic "mysteries" gods who die and rise again represented the eternal drama of the one Divine life, alike in Nature and in man; and "Salvation," chiefly from the great enemy Death, meant "deification" in a half-physical manner, by infusion through sacraments of the very "essence" or living "substance" of the god into the otherwise corruptible nature of humanity. "Happy and blessed one! Thou shalt be a god instead of a man!" In such a salutation, addressed to an initiate, the idea of Hellenistic religion of the popular and less Greek type utters itself. It was salvation by mysterious sacramental infusion of a supra-natural essence [1] analogous to physical life, rather than by moral influences exercised directly by the Spirit of God upon human personality.

Then, too, in typical Greek thought, God in Himself was just the Absolute Reality behind all forms of human experience and thought, every positive attribute known to man being stripped away, so that none but negative attributes—"infinite," "incorruptible," "unchangeable," and the like—were left, whereby to hint at the nature of God. An Absolute Being, He was in every way contrasted with man. Change and decay, in virtue of his material nature, and moral changeableness and corruptibility, in virtue of his psychological nature, were

[1] This side of Hellenistic thought does not, indeed, concern us so much as it would, were we tracing change in the notion of Christian Sacraments and their grace. Yet it does help us to see how certain theories of Christ's Divinity, which deprive Him of direct moral value to us men, were held by devout Greek theologians, as being all of a piece with their sacramental conceptions. Its main interest for us, however, is as throwing side-light on the ancient non-Hebraic idea of God, or the Divine Nature, held by Greek philosophy in its Hellenistic phase.

characteristic of man; while God's excellence lay in Divine immutability, lifted high above all material and emotional forms of being. How, then, could this Unknowable God have any relations with the world of material and sensuous existence? Only through an intermediary, a Being whose nature partakes both of transcendent Deity and of the conditioned world of finite beings. Such is the Divine Reason (*Logos*), whose presence or immanence in all things, and especially in man's reason, is the ground of intelligibility in the Universe and the source of man's feeling after God—high as God Himself is above all finite being or thought.

The *Logos* conception it was which saved the otherwise hopeless situation in which Greek philosophic thought found itself in the Christian era. Small wonder, then, that it held as large a place in the minds of thoughtful men at that time as "evolution" has held for the last two generations, or as "personality" is coming to have in our own. Nor can we wonder if, ere the "fact of Christ" had had time to create in human thought its own more fitting categories of expression, the Logos conception was for long found to be the best form in which to set forth what Christ's Divinity meant to educated Christians in the Roman Empire, in spite of its alien origin and history. None the less it failed, in its ancient form, to afford room for much in Christ that needed due expression, and had time and again to strive to find it in ways which we shall see as we proceed.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

NOTE A.—The conception of an "Image" or manifested form of God, in Himself invisible, probably goes back to Jewish speculation based on the dialogue form of Gen. i. 26 f. In course of time it tended to attract to itself as attributes certain descriptive conceptions in which the Old Testament pictured the activity of God in the visible creation, both Nature and man; such as His "glory" or radiance, or His "word," by which His will acts and rules in human affairs. Later there appears the Rabbinic quasi-personal being, derivative from God's will and dependent thereon, but Lord over all else, known as *Metatron* (see Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue,* cf. Book of Wisdom ix. 4, "Wisdom that sitteth by Thee on the throne"), or again as *Memra,* God's living *Word* of wisdom and power. Such a derivative or relative Divine Being—through whom the Absolute and Transcendent in Himself has actual relations with His world of finite creatures, so that His Wisdom and Power become immanent in it as the sphere of "second causes"—had obvious affinities with the supreme conception of Greek thought since Plato. This was the *Logos,* the metaphysical principle of Reason, to which the world of phenomena owed its order and very being for human knowledge. How this conception helped toward the solution of the problem of Christ's Divine Sonship, which on purely Jewish lines seemed inconsistent with full monotheism, we shall see in the sequel.

NOTE B.—It is on this that the conception of a preexistent "Son" of God is based in the *Epistle of Barnabas,* a Christian writing of about A.D. 75, which uses many Rabbinic modes of thought. "He was Lord of all the world, to whom God said . . . 'Let us make man after

our image and after our likeness'. . .; and He himself, that He might abolish death . . .—and so had to be *manifested in flesh*—submitted (in virtue of this) to sufferings. . . . For if He had not come *in flesh,* how could men have been saved by beholding Him" (v. 5 f., 10; cf. vi. 12)? This is a passage very typical of sub-Apostolic thought, both as regards the nature and means of Christ's salvation and the person of the Saviour. He was a heavenly Spirit (spiritual being) made manifest in "flesh," as earthly "vessel" (vii. 3, 5). There is no sense of Christ's real humanity, in a psychological or experimental sense.

Note C.—It is in place here to notice a very important feature surviving in the Fourth Gospel's fresh presentation of Christ, illustrating, as it does, the persistence of the Hebraic element at a crucial point, viz., Christ's own consciousness. In meeting the criticism of "the Jews" that "he called God his own Father, making himself equal with God," Jesus declares: "I can of myself do nothing: as *I hear,* I judge: and my judgment is righteous *because* I seek not mine own will but the will of him that sent me." His religious knowledge depended on the general moral condition of such knowledge for all men: "If any man *willeth to do* his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." But such community between the psychological form of Christ's consciousness and that of other men soon fades from the Church's Christology as a whole. It survived longer in the practical Latin West than in the more speculative Greek East; and particularly at Rome. Thus in Clement of Rome there is no reference to Christ's pre-existence, only to His historical personality, and especially His "High-priesthood" in the spiritual sphere. In *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Sim. v. 6-7) some half generation later (according to recent research) Christ is the historic person resulting from the indwelling in "flesh" or humanity of a portion

of the pre-existent Spirit called also "the Son of God." Naïve as is such Christology in form, it yet preserves the essential idea which prevails in the Gospels, viz., that the human consciousness of Jesus is the seat of His moral personality.

CHAPTER VI

THE EARLIER CHRISTOLOGIES

J. Vernon Bartlet

"It is sufficiently evident that, though the New Testament leaves us in no doubt concerning the religious and spiritual value which the creative period of Christian experience found in Jesus, it leaves unsolved several important intellectual problems.

"The question of the relation of the Christ to the Father, of the reconciliation of Christ-worship with Monotheism, is not definitely discussed. Again, the Person of Christ is presented to us as one quite definitely human, and not definitely as Divine. The relation of these two elements in the personality of Christ is not the subject of Apostolic speculation. When the Christian faith became as a whole the object of reflection, it was inevitable that these two problems should be raised. The Christological controversies and the dogmatic decisions of the first six Christian centuries are the debate upon these questions."—W. R. MATTHEWS.

SYNOPSIS

I. The Logos-Christology of the Apologists.

Couched in terms of the *Logos* category, used in its Greek rather than its Biblical or semi-Hebraic sense, this rested on a more abstract and less personal conception of God, and expressed a more cosmic view of Christ, than the Biblical.

II. The Transition to Catholic Orthodoxy.

Henceforth Christology means largely the re-fashioning of the Logos-category to do more justice to the Christ of the Gospels. Origen's contribution. General estimate of the value of the Logos-idea in Christology.

The other aspect of the problem—the human soul of Christ—begins now to assert itself afresh. Origen's further contribution. But the earlier type of Logos-Christology persisted (A.D. 325).

Meantime the moral realism of the Gospel story found a truer expression in Lucian of Antioch. But all Greek Christology, and ancient orthodoxy generally, lacked a psychology of the fully religious (Hebraic) type, such as alone could meet the case.

III. Catholic Orthodoxy: its Successive Phases.

(*A*) Nicæa to Chalcedon (A.D. 325 to A.D. 451)

1. *The Nicene Christology.* Once the essential Divinity of the Logos was safeguarded by a technical terminology, the human aspect of Christ's person as depicted in Scripture called clamantly for adjustment thereto.

2. *Attempts to solve the Residual Problems.* Here (*a*) Hilary and Apollinarius on the one side, and (*b*) Theodore and Nestorius on the other, are typical of diverse theories reached from contrasted standpoints—that of the Divine and the human "nature" in Christ respectively—each with its own view of His one "personality."

Both schools illustrate vividly the inadequacy of classic Patristic Christology; yet help to make clearer the nature of the problem. Both, too, bear witness to the uniqueness of Christ's person, even while unable to interpret it aright.

(*B*) The Later Patristic Period.

Alike in East and West, during the rest of the Ancient Period, the Church's witness rested on essentially the same conceptions, though with interesting varieties of form and emphasis.

(*C*) The Middle Ages.

These added nothing of worth to Christology: the cult of the Virgin Mother marks their relative failure. From the time of Bernard of Clairvaux there was a revived feeling for the Jesus of the Gospels, who came more to His rights, with the "open Bible," at the Reformation. But this did not at once mean any general change from traditional Christology.

CHAPTER VI

THE EARLIER CHRISTOLOGIES

I

The Logos-Christology of the Apologists

Catholic Christology begins with the Greek Apologists of the second century. Sharing the experience and feeling for Christ characteristic of their time,[1] these educated Christians wished to defend Christianity against its critics; and to do so took the bold step of relating the object of their faith to the whole Universe, of things as well as men, by means of the current Logos idea. Probably they had, like Justin Martyr himself, found Christ while following the gleam of an idealism of which the Logos idea was the highest expression. Thus they gave Christ a definitely cosmic significance. He became the key of all Truth and Reality, a being in whom the ideal order of the world was summed up or "recapitulated," as Irenæus put it. In keeping with this, "the Incarnation is an extension of the Creator's life in His Creation, and the salvation of man (the microcosm) is a continuation of the history of the world." [2]

To such Christians, Christ in His pre-existent being was the Reason of God, pervading the world of men, and produced before all world-time from God's own being, wherein it had hitherto been latent.[3] As so produced and

[1] See previous chapter, p. 117.

[2] Dr. Montgomery Hitchcock, *Irenæus of Lugdunum*, p. 129.

[3] As Philo seems, in keeping with Prov. viii. 22, to have conceived the Logos, *i.e.*, as a sort of Platonic world of Ideas, with dynamic potentiality for fashioning a material world of order and beauty. As "put forth" or

thereby become personal—capable of conscious action—the Logos could now be styled "God's Son." [1] This Logos-Son became incarnate as Jesus, who differed from all other men, whether prophets or sages like Socrates, by embodying the full complement of the Logos-nature, whereas others possessed it only in part, being but "broken lights" of the whole as manifest in Christ (cf. Heb. i. 1). He was Divine Word in everything He said and did. With the psychological conditions of this contrast Justin and his fellows did not deal. If asked, they would doubtless have correlated it with Christ's sinlessness. But they do not seem to have dwelt enough on His "filial consciousness," as we should phrase it, to see far into the real problem of Christology, nor indeed into "the mystic frame" of manhood—open alike to "the flesh" below, and to the Logos above, itself.

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
  Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
  We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
  Where truth in closest words shall fail,
  When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
  With human hands the creed of creeds,
  In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

externalised for the purpose of world-creation, the Logos to the Apologists attained distinctness from God; and henceforth became "a second" alongside God the Father, yet homogeneous with Him, because produced of His essence or substance.

[1] F. Loofs, *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* (p. 178 f.), says that "In the New Testament Jesus is called the Son of God only after the Incarnation, and not in His pre-existence"; also that the word usually rendered "only begotten" (*monogenes*) does not mean necessarily more than "unique" (see, too, Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, s.v.*).

Almost every touch in Tennyson's fine description of full Divine Incarnation in a human personality can be paralleled in the writings of second-century cultured witnesses to Christ; and not least the fact that in Christ the Words lived such a life that its "tale" could "enter in at lowly doors." The humility of His lot, His spirit of service in reverent love to all men, however lowly or uneducated, so as to lift them to the height of "knowing God" as the Father of their spirits, arrested the attention alike of friends and foes. To the latter, such as Celsus, it seemed the last absurdity in what claimed to be a revelation of the Divine; to the former, such a Christ and His Cross of Love were, as to Paul, the divinest of facts, proved so most chiefly by their efficacy in transforming all sorts and conditions of men and women. To enable all, even "barbarians," so to know God's real nature (as spiritual personality and holy love) as to imitate Him in their own lives—thus fulfilling Plato's ideal of man's perfection and bliss as did few of the "wise"—that indeed was the very token of the Divine Logos as fully present in Jesus.

In the Apologists, then, we have the starting-point of later orthodox Christology, but only in rather tentative form. For to them God and the creative Logos (as "put forth" from within the Godhead) were two in a sense endangering unity in God; and while of one substance, as "light emitted," or "stream," is one with its source, the Logos as a distinct being was *not* eternal, only premundane, produced or "begotten" by an act of will in God. The latter defect Origen, in the first half of the next century, corrected by his theory of "eternal generation"; Father and Logos-Son were correlatives in the eternal being of God.[1] But as Loofs says, "Our clearly

[1] A special terminology to safeguard this, the orthodox doctrine of the Godhead—unity of essential nature (and personality, in our sense of self-conscious rational will), along with distinct modes of being within Godhead ("persons" in the quite different theological sense)—was hammered out only after much discussion during the fourth century. This solution (which later came to include the Spirit in a Trinity) has remained

defined idea of personality was unknown in those times," particularly as applied to God.

At this point let us pause to realise what is happening. "The most important step," it has been said,[1] "that was ever taken in the domain of Christian doctrine, was when the Christian Apologists of the second century drew the equation: the Logos = Jesus Christ. Ancient teachers before them (like Ignatius) had also called Christ 'the Logos,' among the many predicates they ascribed to Him. But now teachers came forward who, previous to their conversion, had been adherents of the Platonic-Stoic philosophy, and for whom the Logos conception formed an inalienable part of a general philosophy of the world. . . . In place of the wholly unintelligible conception 'Messiah,' an intelligible one was acquired at a stroke: Christ's significance for the world was established: His mysterious relation to God was explained. It was indeed a marvellous formula; and was not the way prepared for it by the speculative ideas about the Messiah propounded by Paul and other ancient teachers? . . . What a proof it is of the impression which Christ's teaching created, that Greek philosophers managed to identify Him with the Logos!"

The idea of equating the Logos with an historical human person was an utterly new one; and, apart from insight into the unique moral and religious picture of Jesus among men, was quite incredible. It left, as we shall see, a number of problems only enhanced and some fresh ones added also. "But a man must be blind not to see that for that age the appropriate formula for uniting the Christian religion with Greek thought was the Logos. Nor is it difficult even to-day to attach a valid meaning to the conception. An unmixed blessing it has not been. To a much larger extent than the

satisfactory to Eastern orthodoxy; but its form was modified by Augustine for the West, in the interests of stressing the unity of God, even in His active relations with the Universe.

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (pp. 202 ff.).

earlier speculative notions about Christ it absorbed men's interest: it withdrew their minds from the simplicity of the Gospel"—the historical personality of Jesus, viewed on His own merits in a simply religious way. "The proposition that the Logos had appeared among men had an intoxicating effect"; but it tended to replace the actual historical Christ, as the prime object of contemplation and faith, and "did not lead with any certainty to the God whom Jesus Christ proclaimed." Rather did it lead back to the cosmic type of Deity with which the Logos conception had thus far been associated. And so, as time went on, the Christ of Christian experience also changed.

II

The Transition to Catholic Orthodoxy

Thus far we have not reached the real crux of the effort after a Christology in terms of the union of the Divine Logos with humanity in one personality, Jesus Christ. "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, (himself) man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Here, as in the Gospels generally, it is the *humanity* of Christ's unique personality that is suggested. How is this provided for on the Greek "Logos" theory of His Divinity?

For the most part the problem was simply ignored or shirked prior to Origen, save in circles whose Christology was at once rejected by the common consciousness as too humanitarian, and so heretical. Origen's own teacher Clement, in his zeal for the Logos as incarnate in Christ, virtually denied His real humanity, by denying Him emotional as distinct from rational life. Christ knew "neither pleasure nor pain." Again, "He ate not for the need of His body, which was held together by holy power, but that it might not occur to those who consorted with Him to think of Him otherwise," *i.e.*, as not having a material body at all, as certain "heretics" taught. But

so Clement himself made some aspects of Christ's humanity only apparent (*docetic*), not real. Such views, explicitly stated, were not perhaps widely shared, even in the East; but in more covert forms they were for long present in much orthodox Christology, and all along have obsessed it as a tendency. Real progress may be measured by the degree to which this tendency has been overcome without sacrifice to Christ's uniqueness.

Here Origen was the first to face the full "fact of Christ." This included a human soul like ours, in its emotions and limited knowledge, as depicted in the Gospel story. Origen, says Dr. Biggs,[1] is "the first to speak at large of the human soul of Jesus." True, he does so in terms of his speculative theory of the pre-existence of all rational souls and of their participation in the Logos. In that state the soul of Jesus "received Him wholly, and clove to Him inseparably," by a free choice of good before evil was known—as it was by all other souls (whose pre-temporal fall from good caused their birth into this material world, for discipline with a view to final redemption). Hence there had already taken place a complete moral interpenetration between the Logos and this soul, even before the Incarnation: they had become one Divine yet human personality. The Incarnation thus meant assumption of body and animal soul or life by this Infinite-finite rational being or God-man (a term first used by Origen). His finite "soul" element was already morally sinless, and its finite Divine life only functioned in new conditions, those of our earthly lot. As a result, man's bodily and mortal nature, also, was in Christ interpenetrated by the Logos, as iron by fire, and "divinised."

This surely is a suggestive theory, apart from its special form, which recalls a Platonic "myth." If transposed out of the terms of the soul's pre-existence (rightly set aside by the Church), into those of our world of experience, and applied to a moral process there, it perhaps contains

[1] *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, pp. 189 f.

hints for a solution better than any actually reached by ancient Christology. That the higher or spirit element in all human souls (and so in Christ's) should owe its rationality to native participation in the Logos,[1] its Divine archetype; that by free moral choice it should be interpenetrated with fuller and higher Logos qualities, and so attain perfect freedom and Divine life, and become in principle "one spirit with" the Logos: all this seems to fit closely the scriptural facts of the Incarnation. But for a time other aspects of the problem absorbed attention.

During the latter half of the third century the Logos Christology was differently worked out in various circles. In some the pre-Origenist type represented by so notable a name as Hippolytus [2] of Rome lived on for a time. On the other hand, a less personal view of the Logos also existed, represented, *e.g.*, by Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch soon after A.D. 250. He viewed the Logos simply as a rational energy or influence from God, like the Spirit [3] in the Old Testament. This Logos-power Jesus by a moral process gradually appropriated, so gaining beyond other men the quality of the Father's Divine nature. But Lucian of Antioch, in the next generation, though suspected of like views, seems (in the end at least) to have shared Origen's view of the Logos as always "the perfect Image" of the Father's being, and so personal. Yet this personal Logos exercised Logos-influence ("holy Spirit" unction, as the New Testament puts it), in the form of rational or spiritual revelation, on the human soul of Jesus. Further, in keeping with the strong sense of Christ's growing, and therefore limited, intellectual and moral experience as man, which marked the Antiochene school of theologians, Lucian held that this

[1] "Having," as Athanasius puts it later, "certain adumbrations, as it were, of the Logos, and so being rendered rational," "after the image" of the Logos—itself the Image or manifested essence of God.

[2] See appended Note A, p. 164.

[3] See appended Note B, p. 164.

Logos-influence was gradually absorbed by Jesus into His own personality, through the unique receptivity of His human will. It was only at the end of His perfect human development, by which such union with the Logos was fully consummated, that Jesus became "the Son of God" as man, and so "first-born" archetype "among many brethren" and Saviour of men.

Such a conception recalls that of the Epistle to Hebrews (v. 7-10), according to which the Son, "having been consummated" in obedience, through sufferings even unto death, "became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." Only, in that case the seat of personality lay all along in the Divine nature: whereas to Lucian the seat of personality in the Incarnate Son of God is rather the human nature, which gradually comes to share in absolute fulness the quality of Divine personal Life, as God's dependent "Image" or "Son," according to the creative idea in Genesis.

Here lies *the ultimate Christological issue,* as raised by Scripture, Christian experience, and the story of the Church's attempt to interpret both. Already, however, the Church's common experience and thought of Christ no longer adequately reflected His historical personality —to its great loss in moral quality. The metaphysical obscured the psychological or human approach to Christology; and it was only after the middle of the fourth century that the latter began to receive in other than Antiochene circles the attention due to it. Christ was now, and henceforth, less and less viewed as "the first-born among many brethren." Not His affinities with us, but His affinities with the Godhead, formed the pressing interest of the time.

Here we must touch on a point that vitally concerns the differences between the Biblical and the ecclesiastical types of Christology, and so the interpretation which in the end may commend itself to mankind: viz., the contrast between the Hebraic and Greek *ideas of human nature.* Developed Hebrew religion, we saw, was in

terms of personal relations between God and man: Hellenistic religion dwelt rather on the contrasted "natures" in themselves, the one absolute and incorruptible, the other changeable and corruptible. Their psychology affords equal contrast.[1] The Hebrew view of man was religious, concrete, synthetic: that of Greek philosophy was analytic and abstract. In its latter form it was also dualistic, sharply contrasting mind and matter, rather than relating both to one creative source, God. In Hebrew thought, "flesh" and "spirit" were both traced to God's will and action, His purpose being that in man they should come to constitute *a psychological and moral unity*. Hence man's soul, as seat of personality, was viewed differently by Hebrew and Greek minds—so far as the latter had the idea of morally holy personality at all.

Thus, to the Greek mind man is more or less self-contained, and therefore strictly finite, limited by his own nature and conditions: "to the Hebrew, his higher possibilities are directly dependent on God." Towards God there is *an ever-open channel* for Divine influence to play a major part in the making of "holy" or qualitatively Divine personality, through the "grace" of God's Spirit; yet man has a real, if dependent, part to play in determining by his receptivity the degree to which the divine influx of light in conscience is suffered to persuade the will to right inner choice. Here Hebraic psychology, as fulfilled and sublimated in Christ, is simply that of human experience at its deepest level. In a word, it is a radically religious psychology; and so it, and it alone, affords a standpoint from which truly to view the religious personality of Christ Himself *in categories not foreign to the genius of His own historical consciousness*—like those of Greek psychology—but developed in Christian minds by His own influence.

In the light of these considerations, the bearings of

[1] Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 148 ff., is here freely drawn on.

which reach far beyond the ancient Church, we can now confine the rest of our survey to certain aspects of Christology. The very heart of the matter is the unity of Christ's personality, as at once Divine and human. How could He be truly Divine while living under the forms and conditions of human experience, not only physical but also psychological and moral, and *developing* amid the limitations of a particular historical environment? In relation to this paradox the Church's thought became largely divided between two types of Christology, the Alexandrine and the Antiochene. The former tended to subordinate the moral to the abstract metaphysical aspect of Christ's person: the latter reversed this relation. Nor did the two tendencies attain real harmony within the ancient Church, one main reason being that both lacked a sound psychology of the Hebraic rather than Greek kind. For want of this the Alexandrines, from Athanasius to Cyril among the "orthodox," failed adequately to reckon with Christ's humanity, psychologically and morally; while the Antiochenes failed to provide for unity of His two "natures" in one Divine-human personality.

III

Catholic Christology: its Successive Phases

(*A*) Nicæa to Chalcedon

1. *The Nicene Christology.*

The Greek Logos conception, as an explanation of the Divine in Christ, admitted, as we have seen, of varying forms. About 318 yet another was added by Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, but with some influence from Lucian of Antioch working in his mind. He held that the Logos had been produced by the Father's bare fiat, and not even from His own Being (as Hippolytus had taught), simply as medium for creating the universe of

finite existences. Such a Logos could at best be only semi-Divine. What here specially interests us, however, are the main reasons of its rejection by the Christian consciousness, after long and severe struggle. They were, first, Christian experience as to the Christ of the Gospels, and next, the quality of the salvation mediated by Him to men. For if the Divine nature in Christ were less than fully Divine, it could not, as united to "flesh" or human nature, convey truly Divine life to men. A creaturely nature, however exalted, would be a dividing as well as a uniting mediator, and not produce real fellowship with God. That is, the Arian Christology *was inadequate to Christian experience.* So the Church at Nicæa and later witnessed that the Divine or Logos element in Christ was of one and the same nature (*homoousios*) with God the Father, as truly as a human son is with his father. As such He was co-ordinate in rank of being, a co-eternal mode of the one living God, His "Image" or "Son." But such a decision seemed only to add to the difficulty of saying, "Jesus Christ is the Divine Logos incarnate, or made man."

2. *Attempts to solve the Residual Problems.*

(*a*) *The Alexandrine Solution: Apollinarianism.*

How could such a Logos-Christ share the *limited knowledge* proper to man as man? Here Hilary of Poitiers, who represents both West and East, may be taken as typical of Christian thought about A.D. 350. Though he explained the Incarnation of the Logos, along the lines of Phil. ii., as involving a "self-emptying" (*kenosis*) as regards "the form of Deity," so as to assume the limited "form of a bond-servant," he viewed each of these modes of existence (as Paul himself had done) mainly as an outward lot. Hence while he recognised such self-humbling limitation both as a single act (incarnation) and as a process, which reached a climax of

obedience on the Cross, he hesitated as to the inward aspect in this process. "He cannot *fear* death whose purpose is to die only for a moment." But human emotions are largely due to limited knowledge; so we reach the *impasse* of the whole approach to ancient Christology, *i.e.,* its inability to face the fact that such limitation is *of the essence* of manhood, and that the Gospel story plainly attributes it to Christ.[1]

Another and bolder attempt to escape this consequence, while facing all the historical facts, was made a few years later by one of the greatest of Greek Biblical scholars and theologians, Apollinarius of Laodicea. A champion of the full Nicene doctrine of the Logos, he yet perceived the absolute need of harmonising this belief with the true humanity of the Christ of the Gospels, especially as regards experience of moral trial and limited knowledge. To this problem even Athanasius was strangely blind. For he was content to speak of the Divine Logos as dwelling in a human body "as in a temple," as though body and manhood were the same; whereas, in fact, it was in the human soul or consciousness, summed up as will, that the battle-ground of human salvation lay. There too, according to the Gospel narrative, Christ had won His unique moral victory over the temptations and perplexities which beset our human nature.

Stirred up by Antiochene, as well as Arian, teaching on the abstract possibility of moral failure in the Christ of the Gospels, but also led on by study of the New Testament itself, Apollinarius addressed himself to the Christological problem in a profounder way than any

[1] Hilary, like most of the Fathers, has to make Jesus' disclaimer of knowledge of the hour of His Second Coming "a divine device ('economy') of silence," hiding the real case from His hearers. It is only worth alluding to such desperate expedients for evading the full realism of "the fact of Christ" in order to bring out their deeper meaning, viz., as reducing to absurdity the assumptions which led to them. Yet these were common to Greek Christology generally.

since Origen. He fixed on the broad statement "the Logos *became flesh,*" in the Biblical sense of "human nature," and insisted that it meant just what it said; viz., that the Divine nature, in itself unlimited from outside, assumed by a voluntary act of Love the limitations of human experience, and then abode within them,[1] so as to share the lot of men needing redemption, particularly from the aberrant tendency of the human mind and will.

Thus Christ inaugurated a new type of "heavenly" or "spiritual" humanity (1 Cor. xv. 45-47). That, and nothing else, was Apollinarius' idea on its positive side. On its negative side, however, he formulated for the first time what had been tacitly involved in most Greek theology. His thesis was that the Logos, as self-emptied (in becoming man), became the very "mind," both as reason and self-conscious will, of the man Christ. So alone could He become "flesh" psychologically or experimentally for so alone the Logos would not merely dwell in a human body "as in a temple," but share normal human experiences as His very own. This theory secured the continuity of Christ's consciousness and that of the pre-incarnate Logos, as stages in one and the same personal being (as assumed by Paul in Phil. ii. 6 f.; 2 Cor. viii. 9); and at the same time it provided for human limitations, in virtue of the nature of the Logos' self-emptying. "Incarnation," he wrote, "is self-emptying," in a sustained active sense. But he did not really provide in the experience of the Redeemer for a fully human consciousness, and therefore for reality of temptation *as known to us men.* In his Christ, as in Hilary's, the seat of personality was in the Logos, *aware throughout of Him-*

[1] Unlike Hilary he viewed Phil. ii. 6 as meaning an active keeping-in-abeyance of all in Christ's nature that was wholly distinctive of the Divine state, and allowing all that was proper to the human, such as suffering and limited knowledge, to affect His whole personal experience; in order that by a moral process of obedience the Logos Son might vanquish human frailty in its own sphere (cf. Heb. ii. 14-18; v. 7-9.).

self as such, however limited (by conscious self-restraint) in the forms of His actual moral life; whereas in us the seat of personality is in the finite human mind, which is not naturally aware of Divine kinship and relations, and so is exposed to "the deceitfulness of sin," as the self-conscious Logos could not be.

Here was, and still is, the *root difficulty* lurking in all typical Greek Christology,[1] as based on the notion of Divine and human natures contrasted to the point of mutual exclusiveness. It assumes that the seat of Christ's self-consciousness was the Divine Logos, conscious of His own Deity. Inevitably, then, the moral experience of Christ as Saviour of men was not really like ours (apart altogether from actual sin or self-will). This meant that He was by very nature—physically, as they phrased it, metaphysically as we should put it—incapable of yielding to any temptation He might experience. But if so, the nature of the personality of man's Saviour would be essentially other than ours,[2] and so the moral victory won by it would be of no value to us. For, as it was put tersely by one of his critics, "That which was not assumed," viz., man's self-conscious mind or rational *ego,* with its liability (as finite) to abuse its abstract freedom, and so sin, "was not healed." In fact the Incarnation would be a mere "theophany" or manifestation of God in human guise, with certain added human experiences.

[1] Apollinarius' opponents of the "orthodox" Cappadocian school, Basil and the two Gregories, shared the same assumption; but they admitted, in the abstract, a human mind alongside the Divine personal Logos. They held it, however, to be all along absorbed into His own personality, as simply an element contributory—like the sensuous or animal bodily nature —to His total experience. Thus in their own way they too, with Cyril of Alexandria in the next generation, viewed the Divine Logos as the *self-conscious* nucleus of Christ's personality.

[2] This objection of Gregory Nazianzen really cuts still deeper. It tells also against his own view of the *method* of salvation, by the mere contact of the Logos with human nature (however defined), rather than by the spiritual method of moral influence. Indeed the twofold difficulty was never met by "orthodox" Christology, and still remains a crucial test of any adequate Christology to-day (see Chapter VII).

But neither was this critic able to meet this difficulty as applicable also to his own view. It was left, then, to the greatest thinker of the opposite or Antiochene school, which tried to be true above all to the Biblical facts of Christ's consciousness, to face this radical problem in a serious manner.

(*b*) *The Antioch School: "Nestorianism."*

At this point the problem of Christ's humanity begins to go beyond that of moral temptation and limited knowledge, and passes into its second phase, that of *the seat or form of His personality*. Theodore of Mopsuestia, soon after the Council at Constantinople in 381 which rejected Apollinarius' peculiar theory, developed a fresh Christology. It started from and was controlled by the moral and religious aspects of the New Testament presentation, especially the Gospel story, rather than the current metaphysics of the Divine and human "nature" or "essences," which had thus far failed to do justice to the Biblical facts and the conditions of Christ's moral Saviourhood. On the root-issue Theodore [1] urges that, if it was Christ's Godhead, *in any immediate sense,* that conquered sin, then it could not benefit us; "for what is there in common between the Godhead and a human soul, when the attainment of a perfect way of life is in question?" Further, "if they (Apollinarians) say Godhead took the place of the human mind in the Lord Christ Incarnate, why did Christ need the co-operation of the Holy Spirit? (a most pertinent question then and now). . . . Its virtue would have sufficed for all; nay, all His actions must have been accomplished from that source, so that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would have been superfluous." And, be it noted, the fact that the grace of the Holy Spirit is recognised in the Synoptic

[1] As quoted by Dr. C. E. Raven, *Apollinarianism,* pp. 289 ff., whose whole discussion is most important, and supports the general findings of this essay (see pp. 297 ff.).

Gospels as needful to the equipment of Jesus "the Christ," or Spirit-Anointed, holds also against all ordinary Greek Logos orthodoxy.[1]

Theodore, however, had a theory which he felt avoided the dilemma and found room for both an indwelling of the Logos and the grace of the Holy Spirit in one Christ. But it involved giving up the current language about a union in Him of the Divine Logos and of man as of two "natures," in favour of another sort of personal unity, which he was the first after Lucian to attempt to describe. Christ's personal oneness was in the sphere of self-consciousness—where a "higher" and "lower" psychological self can coexist and attain moral union—rather than in terms of disparate "natures," united in an unthinkable metaphysical union. It was in fact analogous to the development into a single person of the higher (spirit) and lower (flesh) elements in man. As such it was on Hebraic rather than on Greek lines, as was natural in so great a Biblical scholar as Theodore. Alongside the Divine in Christ there was a true self-conscious manhood, which developed in range and deepened in realised moral intensity of filial holiness, as the Gospel story of His ministry describes,[2] until it reached its climax in Gethsemane, with its "howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Here the "I" which speaks in the historic Christ is surely a personality essentially human, one whose own safeguard against failure, and whose secret of victory over the "weakness"

[1] The truth is that the Synoptic and Patristic Christologies are not of one type, but are alternative ways of conceiving the same facts; and the former (the Hebraic), in terms of the Spirit rather than the Logos, is to-day coming again to its own. It is a significant fact that in typical Greek Christology, from the second century onwards, the Holy Spirit ceases to be reckoned with in Christ's personal life after the supernatural conception. The relatively late doctrine of the mutual "interpenetration" of Father, Son (Logos) and Spirit, in the one Godhead, may suggest how these two modes of Deity—as Reason (static) and as Spirit (dynamic)—might be treated as involving each other. But it was not actually applied to Christology. That may be a specific advance in theory reserved for our own day.

[2] See appended Note C, p. 165.

of "the flesh" was the "Watch and pray" which He then commended to His disciples. The help He thus derived from God in His moral struggle was like in kind to that open to them. To Theodore such grace was what it was in Christ through unique prompting by the indwelling Logos. This Logos it was ultimately who, in the one historic Christ, "educated his (own) soul, and trained it to subdue its passions and to restrain the desires of the flesh"; and so really but indirectly "effected those conquests" and "healed the ills" alike of man's soul and body. But the indwelling Godhead did so, not by replacing in Christ the human self-conscious mind and will, as Apollinarius [1] taught, but rather by inspirational influence, being permanently in spiritual and moral union with them in virtue of their unique receptiveness. Thus there was scope for Jesus' growth, not only in stature (which is all Athanasius really allows), but also in "wisdom" and "in favour with God and man," "by following the virtue which accompanies understanding and knowledge."

That is, the unity in Christ of the Divine Logos and full human nature was one of mutual spiritual sympathy, or love in action (*eudokia*), involving spiritual interpenetration in the sphere of consciousness—particularly moral consciousness, the very core of personality. The mode by which this experimental unity or "conjunction" between the Logos and "a complete man" was effected is really "ineffable," as Theodore was at pains to emphasise. But his psychological mode of description, in terms of feeling and will (as in the Gospels and in Christ's own usage), was less inadequate and misleading than description in metaphysical terms, such as "nature" or "essence." For the latter are sub-personal and alien to the genius of Biblical religion. In all this Theodore throws off the spell of Greek psychology, and returns to

[1] He thought the human mind (self-consciousness) essentially (in its constitutive *ousia*) disloyal to God, because egoistic—which, as his critics rightly urged, gave up the very idea of any redemption of man as such.

the Hebrew idea of manhood which Jesus Himself shared (see further, p. 147).

Further, the union of God and man in Christ's personality was progressive, growing by a moral process like that of the deepening communion between God and all devout men: but it had a unique element of *complete harmony,* and so of absoluteness, at every stage. "The indwelling" of the Logos in Jesus was not quite as in other holy men, "effected by God's love to them" in successive acts of "grace," as we should say. "In Him it was as in a Son, by an act [1] of love *accomplished once for all"* (and *so* as a matter of "nature" also). "That is, by the act of indwelling He united to Himself *wholly* the man whom He assumed, and prepared him to receive a share in every privilege which He, the Indweller, the Son by nature, already possessed." The unique intimacy of this psychological union of two natures, functionally interpenetrating by a progressive moral process, while *per se* distinct, was such as to justify the description "one person" applied to the new personality *constituted by their union.* The uniqueness of that union—"a union of title (Son), will, energy, authority, majesty, lordship, dignity, power, between them which nothing can divorce" —was proved by Christ's sinlessness at every stage, particularly by His own sense of flawless harmony with His Father. In other words, the union was of the *functions* [2] of the underlying "natures," not of the natures as such, and so was psychological rather than metaphysical. *"Eudokia,"* as Dr. Raven says, "takes the place of *Ousia"* as the principle of personal union.[3] Such a union of "natures" yields a true single personality, in the moral

[1] *I.e.,* by a higher "grace" or self-giving relation of the Logos, which made the indwelling or "incarnation" unique, "the one instance of the particular being its own universal" (to use Dr. Mozley's phrase in *Essays Catholic and Critical,* p. 196).

[2] See appended Note D, p. 166.

[3] So Theodore: "The expression 'union according to essence' (which Cyril used) is only rightly applied to things co-essential (*e.g.,* the Trinity in God); applied to things essentially different it is quite inaccurate, for it

sense of character resting on or achieved by a single self-consciousness or person. But neither Theodore nor any ancient Father had clear in his mind the distinction between "nature" or "essence" in the abstract and the concrete, nor the philosophic notion of self-consciousness. Both of these are gains of the modern mind, and give it the means of attaining a correspondingly more adequate Christology. According to Theodore, as Dr. Raven says (p. 306), Christ "reproduces in the fullest measure consistent with life upon earth the *whole quality* of Godhead: His nature is not human only but Divine. He is perfect God; for He is perfectly united with the Logos in the only way in which such union is possible, by perfect love expressed in perfect unity of thought and feeling and will. He is perfect man, having in its fulness that unbroken communion with the Logos which is the crown and glory of humanity." [1] Here we have broadly the really Catholic or universal Christian faith touching Christ. And in the last words quoted may be found the key to the difficulty which even Theodore's Christology—right as it was in its psychological approach—left unanswered. He himself stated it thus: "Men would fain make a case against us on the ground that, if we speak of two complete entities in Christ (the Logos and Jesus), we must necessarily speak of two Sons," *i.e.*, two persons or centres of self-conscious will, without moral unity because without a single co-ordinating self-consciousness—the psychological basis of personality.

(*B*) Patristic Orthodox Christology

To this no full reply was possible in terms of ancient philosophic thought, by which Christology was then

cannot then escape the sense of 'confusion.' The method of union according to 'love,' whilst preserving the natures unconfused, allows an indivisible oneness of person."

[1] That is, we see in Christ "the complete appropriation of (human) personality to the manifestation of God" (Evelyn Underhill, *Man and Supernatural*, p. 123).

necessarily limited. All that it could do, and did in General Councils—at Constantinople in 381 and more emphatically at Chalcedon in 451 (after its virtual denial under Cyril's lead at Ephesus in 431)—was to reaffirm the full fact of Christ and the problem it contained; viz., that in Him were united two *complete* natures, that of the Logos and of manhood, and that the two in union constituted a single personality, the Lord Christ. Only the vague and shifting nature of the idea of personality at that time cloaked the Church's inability to think these "natures" together into unity, without sacrificing real personality on one side or the other. It assumed, however, that the proper seat or form of personality in the God-man was His Divine or Logos nature,[1] not His human one. His unique holiness was by nature rather than moral achievement, and so far was unlike ours. But the truth seems to be that the Divine Logos had twofold relation to the humanity of Christ, *as it has to that of every man*:—

(i) A fundamental one, constitutive of His human capacity for personality, as a finite self-conscious subject or ego.

(ii) A progressive or developmental one, by which, in a reciprocal process of Divine initiative or "grace," as Spirit influence, and of human receptivity as personal will, His moral personality (in the concrete sense) gradually attained spiritual perfection of Divine sonship.

Granted that such Sonship was in Christ's case perfect at every stage, still unique interpenetration of His human

[1] Christ was to it, as to Cyril, "one (personal) nature (or form of being), that of the Logos, in an incarnate state." Whether "in an incarnate state" be used to qualify "nature" or rather "Logos" is really immaterial for the point here at issue; viz., Was the seat of Christ's one personality Jesus or the Logos? "Orthodox" patristic Christology replied decidedly "the Logos." How then could His experience be like ours, and so His complete victory over sin be a pledge and moral aid of like victory for us through Him? How was He "completely human" (*perfectus homo*), if also "the completely divine" from the moment of conception? This difficulty, as Dr. Sanday says (*Christologies Ancient and Modern*, p. 95), "attaches to the whole patristic position."

personality with the Divine Logos, *qualitatively* or functionally, is ideally possible in keeping with true humanity [1] as Divinely planned (cf. Athanasius above, p. 145). Nay more, anything other than this would be fatal to the redemptive value of Christ as the archetype of a new species of redeemed manhood, one spiritually united with God. In other words, manhood's normal relation to God on the lines of Hebrew psychology, *man being always dependent for his true or spiritual life on a native openness to the Divine nature as Spirit* (the Hebraic conception of "Deity in action"), affords an analogy and basis [2] for the special or uniquely perfect relation of Christ's manhood to the Logos active in and upon it. In this light the best formula for the unity of Christ's personality coined in the ancient Church was "one Divine-human activity," *i.e.*, one concrete will, resulting from the full interpenetration of the one nature by the qualitative influence of the other. This recalls Origen's simile of iron (the human soul) made glowing by fire (the Logos), which really favours the opposite alternative to that chosen by Greek Christology; for it suggests that the original nature or subject, and so the seat of personality in the one Christ, was His humanity, and the interpenetrating quality the Divine "fire" of the personal Logos.

[1] All human receptivity to "the word of God" implies (as John x. 35 recognises) the Word or Logos element inherent in man's "rational" soul. It was a defect in the Antiochene Christology not to bring this fact out explicitly, as helping to explain the *essential* nature of the conjunction with and participation in Deity, which is attributed to Jesus Christ's humanity in a unique degree.

[2] Gregory of Nazianzus, "the Theologian" of Greek orthodoxy, argued that, from one point of view, our mind is a complete whole, possessed ideally (through the Logos "seed" in it) of self-determination in relation to man's animal impulses: but that, strictly, it is incomplete and absolutely dependent on God, especially for actual moral freedom (as Augustine saw more clearly than any Greek theologian). So in relation to the person of Christ "it is not a case of the one whole (the Logos) crowding out another whole—the man" (Dr. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the History of Christian Doctrine,* p. 250). But the problem remains as to which nature in Him is the *personal* whole, the seat of self-consciousness and Will.

It was a serious flaw in all ancient Christology not to distinguish enough the personal and impersonal aspects of the Logos' life. Without this, the Incarnation in Christ would mean two forms of personal life, two Sonships in the Logos: His eternal Sonship as God, with its universal cosmic activity, and side by side with this a fresh temporal sonship, morally active from a new and finite self-conscious centre, Christ's humanity. But to this difficulty ancient Christology was hardly alive. No doctrine of self-emptying (*kenosis*) could remove it. A double Logos-life, in a personal sense (so that the incarnate Logos would pray to Himself as in God), remains a contradiction to thought.[1] But once let the above distinction —like that between the Spirit of God as creative and the "Holy Spirit" influence or inspiration in human souls —be kept in mind, and the way becomes open for holding that the form or seat of Christ's personality was His humanity rather than His Divinity.[2] And therewith traditional Christology, in its less speculative Chalcedonian form, would regain something of its lost *relevance* to living thought, both psychologically and practically; for the person of Christ as Saving Head, and the Salvation of men as His members, would be brought under one and the same principle.

We have dwelt thus long on the phases of Christology between A.D. 350 and 450, because this period brings out so clearly the real problem. The attempts to solve it which followed in the next few centuries are of little permanent interest save negatively, viz., to confirm the bankruptcy of discussion in terms of "natures" in an abstract metaphysical and non-psychological sense. Thought was not yet ripe for the truth in terms of personality *per se,* as the ultimate reality for man's inter-

[1] See further p. 175 (Chapter VII).

[2] Compare Dr. Sanday's suggestion (p. 182) that Christ's subconscious mind was at first the *locus* of the Logos' special presence in Him.

pretation of religious experience, and particularly of the unique "fact of Christ." Indeed, it is largely an idea due to Christ's own influence on the human soul and mind. And so, during long centuries, for want of a fitter category, Christology still fumbled with the facts in terms of "nature," "essence," "substance," rather than of wills within one self-consciousness or personality. The chief thing the Church's common mind had really achieved, especially at Chalcedon, was to keep the full problem before itself verbally, in the form of a paradox. In this way it maintained, under the forms of a theological symbolism so inadequate as to be gravely misleading, the precious religious truth of Divine incarnation in Christ—the highest expression of the yet more ultimate truth of Divine grace—as a unique means of spiritual life in man.

After the sixth century the history of Christology virtually ends in the East. The Church settled down to a traditional acceptance of the œcumenical creeds, a state of things which, both as cause and effect, went hand in hand with growing disuse of general personal reading of the New Testament, and so decline in its type of religious experience. In the East, Cyril's semi-Apollinarian tendency reappeared in extreme forms, which seemed to a large minority the logical outcome of the "orthodox" idea of one incarnate Logos-personality, which they spoke of as Christ's one all-inclusive "nature" (hence their nicknames, *Monophysites* or *Monothelites*). In the West, with its broad, common-sense practical mind, the four œcumenical decisions were simply taken over instinctively, as being the most authoritative expressions of the central idea of Incarnation. Their general conception commended itself to devotional sentiment, as expressed in the Christian cultus or forms of worship then in use,[1] on the basis of current sacramental doctrine. It seemed, too, in accord

[1] It is in the *Te Deum* that we can best see the experimental appreciation of its Lord by Western Christendom, from the fifth century onwards.

with such partial and piecemeal impressions as "the faithful" were able to gain of the Christ of the Gospels and of the New Testament generally. Connected personal Bible reading was dying out; and Christ's figure was growingly a conventional one, far other than the real historic Jesus. Here even Augustine's influence was small, though his experimental approach to the Christian salvation contributed elements of renewed realism to the light in which he himself viewed the Christ of Nicæa and Constantinople. Nor did he reflect deeply on the relations of the Divine and human elements in Christ's one personality.

(*C*) The Middle Ages

The contribution of the Middle Ages to Christology counts for little, at least in the positive direction.[1] This is true even of its hymns, typical as they were of the "religious," *i.e.,* the monks, with their far-reaching dualism between the Divine and human. There is a sad falling off from the *Te Deum* to the *Dies Iræ,* which reflects the prevailing thought of Christ as Him from whose awful awards it was felt needful to resort to the womanly tenderness of the Virgin "Mother of God," the *Mater dolorosa.* Thus the progress of her cult is the measure of the Church's general decadence from the level of Biblical thought. It witnesses how Christology had ceased to be the guiding light and inspiration of Christian piety, its place being largely taken by substitutes, such as devotion to Mary, to the Saints, to the Mass. There was, indeed, a revival of devotional feeling for the Jesus

[1] Compare Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte* (vierte Aufl., 531 f.). It helps, however, to expose the inadequacy of the traditional Catholic theory, by drawing out the consequences of its "two natures," Christology, the human factor ceasing to count psychologically in any real sense, as regards faith, hope, or even prayer. Thus to the great Thomas Aquinas, Christ's prayers were merely for didactic and exemplary purposes towards us men (See Cave, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ,* p. 133).

of the Gospels in Bernard of Clairvaux;[1] in the truly Catholic, because Evangelic, experience which breathes in the timeless hymn, "Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts"; in Francis of Assisi, with his new sense of the personality of Jesus as the human embodiment of Divine Love, and his recovered note of gladness, due to the inspiring power of Christ to make service a joy; and in not a few of the mystics of the later Middle Ages. In these last the spirit of the new races, hitherto kept in spiritual pupilage by the legalism and traditionalism of the Roman Church, is seen reacting and making its own contribution. At the same time the New Testament begins again really to affect Christian experience and thought; and comes to its own decisively at the Reformation, and not least as regards the place occupied by Christ in Christianity. This was largely true of Luther himself; but he did not work out his vision into a Christology.

[1] His mystic "Jesus" piety is of the emotional and even feminine type, being largely set forth under the form of Sermons on *The Song of Songs;* while that of the typical German mystics of the later Middle Ages was more virile and ethical in type.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VI

NOTE A.—Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenæus, but with more speculative interest, had held that the Logos first attained distinct existence, like radiance from light, by an act of will in God the Father, with a view to world-creation; and further that it was only as incarnate that this "Only-begotten Logos of God" was called in Scripture "Son." Divine Sonship, as in very idea a relation of dependence, was *completely* realised only in the personality of the historic Christ. The first of these two conceptions was on the lines of the Apologists' Christology, and left ambiguous the degree of personal quality possessed by the Logos apart from its incarnate form in Christ.

NOTE B.—Spirit and Logos may be viewed as alternative conceptions, Hebraic and Greek, expressing respectively the dynamic and static aspects of the one divine Life active in a created and finite world of being—a world in process towards "the manifestation" of the glory of God in "sons of God." Irenæus in particular suggests such a view of the Logos and the Spirit of God—corresponding to His Word and Wisdom in the Old Testament—in calling them God's two "hands" or organs of His action in Creation, to whom God said, "Let us make man" (Gen. i. 26). But the Spirit to Irenæus, as to most Christians until late in the fourth century, was really the dynamic or plastic influence of the Logos, as God's Son or Image. It was only a century after Origen that a general effort was made to co-ordinate the Spirit with the Logos in a doctrine of triune Godhead.

NOTE C.—Clearly the Christ of the Gospels was a single moral personality. The objective token of its unique Divinity, qualitatively, was the functional power of Christ's

human personality to mediate the Spirit (the dynamic or "life" mode of Godhead) in a new and final manner, as "the Spirit of Christ"—a function, as vice-gerent of God, which made Him virtually "Lord" in the Old Testament sense of "God revealed" (See Phil. ii. 9-11; 1 Cor. xv. 27 f.). The opponents of Theodore and the Antiochenes especially Cyril and the Alexandrians, who in theology gave the last word to *a priori* philosophic theory rather than historic and moral facts, were forced to sacrifice the real personality of Christ's manhood. They made it only nominally personal, as being an element in the one Christ, whose true personality already pre-existed as the Logos: *i.e.,* the latter's modes of experience or "state" were simply extended, by His assuming the finite forms of human consciousness. And so it came to be orthodox to say, like Leontius (*c.* A.D. 530), that Christ's humanity was personal only *in* the Logos (enhypostatic): in itself it was impersonal. The opposite alternative, that the Divine Logos' "nature," in its functional aspect as the self-communicative "life" or activity of the "living" God, attained unique finite personal form in the personality of the man Christ Jesus, no one any longer dared to maintain: in the imperfect form given it by Paul of Samosata it had once for all been declared heresy. Dr. Mozley says (*Essays Catholic and Critical,* p. 192) that "Catholic theology never meant that, in the concrete, the human nature of Christ lacked its *persona,*" but only denied "a human subject" (or ego) of Christ's "human experiences." But the same was true also of Apollinarius, whom the Council of Constantinople condemned for sacrificing Christ's complete humanity. The fact seems to be, as Dr. Raven argues (pp. 297-301), that apart from the Antiochene theologians Greek theology generally was substantially and at heart Apollinarian, though the Council of Chalcedon (which was acceptable to Nestorius), largely under the influence of the Latin West through Leo the Great, formally safeguarded the truth thus endangered.

NOTE D.—These functions Theodore's follower, Nestorius, styled "persons" in a sense of his own, *i.e.*, wills, as factors in the moral life of a person—what Bishop Temple in his *Christus Veritas* calls "personalities." See *Christianity in History* by the present writer and Dr. A. J. Carlyle [1] for the way in which the varying uses of technical terms complicated theological differences. Thus it is now clear that Nestorius was not a "Nestorian" in the sense rejected by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Function, within the sphere of self-consciousness, is the conception which ancient Christology in its best exponents felt after in vain. Nestorius caused confusion by trying to express it by his special use of "person" (much in the old sense of rôle, or character). Theodore, too, had the idea when he wrote "each (nature) is rightly called 'Son,' since there is but one Person (a Son), constituted by a union of natures"—both of which partake in the concrete, psychological unity issuing therefrom; on the other hand, "When we wish to emphasise their separation, we can call that of the man or that of the Godhead a perfect whole" (*qua* "nature"). But like other ancient theologians, neither distinguished clearly the abstract and concrete senses of "nature."

[1] Pp. 277 and 288.

CHAPTER VII

THE LATER CHRISTOLOGIES

J. Vernon Bartlet

". . . that opposition of Godhead and manhood as two utterly antithetical realities (*ousiai*), which we have seen to be both open to criticism in itself and fatal to any attempt at finding a Christology."

"The Incarnation is seen to be the central moment in the history in time of Creation." [1]

[1] Leonard Hodgson, in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, pp. 374, 385.

SYNOPSIS

I. Transition from Mediæval to Modern Christology.

Through the Reformation Christ Himself was again known experimentally as the one all-sufficient mediator of right personal relations with God. Christology, however, changed but little, until Pietism on the one hand, and Rationalism on the other, began to dissolve the formal "orthodoxy" of the previous period.

II. Modern Christologies.

(*a*) *Schleiermacher the Pioneer.* His emphasis on religious experience: the unique "filial" holiness of Christ's human personality. Biblical Christology studied afresh.

(*b*) *Some Nineteenth-century Christologies.*

Ritschl, and his "value-judgments": Christ has for us "the value of God."

The "Kenotists" revert in principle to Apollinarianism, but with franker recognition of limited knowledge and power in the incarnate Logos.

The Mediating School of Dorner gave Christ's humanity true personality and made Divine incarnation a progressive, morally-conditioned fact.

(*c*) *More Recent Tendencies.*

These are continuous with Ritschl and Dorner. The general tendency is to consider the form, if not the seat, of Christ's unique personality to be His humanity rather than his Divinity (as in traditional Christology)—the two "natures" being viewed as spiritually akin.

Typical views: the religious uniqueness of Christ (Kähler, Loofs): Incarnation the final form of God's self-humbling in creation (Forsyth, H. R. Mackintosh): "emergent evolution," a fresh, helpful conception: Rashdall, Temple Raven: Sanday and the "subconscious" as applied to Christology.

III. Retrospect and Conclusion.

Christ, who on His self-evidencing merits, is unique in His human personality ("the Son of Man") and in His filial consciousness towards God ("the Son of God"), is also unique in His light-and-life-giving influence on men ("a quickening Spirit"); and so He is the archetypal "Firstborn among many brethren," to whom He proves Saviour and Lord of Life.

CHAPTER VII

THE LATER CHRISTOLOGIES

I

The Transition to Modern Christology

The net result of Mediæval Christianity was that Christ as a personality was largely lost in His Church as an institution. The latter became a system of official mediation between Him and Christians as members of His mystical Body. The watchword was no longer "Where Christ is, there is the Church," but "Where the Church is, there is Christ." It was in the foreground, and its sacrificial system of mediation controlled and obscured, as well as witnessed to and suggested, His mysterious and awful presence in the background. Christ was but faintly realised in Himself, on His own merits, as once for all set forth in His historic life. His filial character was no longer conceived as the visible likeness, in human form, of the invisible God, His Father and our Father. His personality had ceased to be the archetype of true or Christian personality for us men—and His holiness the exemplar for all His followers, not only for a special "religious" order among them. In a word, Christ was the Lord of Monks, rather than the Lord of Life for all sorts and conditions of men.

Accordingly the essence of "the Reformation," the greatest of historic returns to original or Apostolic Christianity, was the rediscovery of Christ as the accessible centre of His own Gospel, for the individual no less than for corporate experience. Here lay the recovered Evangelic note of "Protestantism," on which depends its claim

to be a more universal and authentic type of Christian life and of witness to its Head than that against which it "protested" or testified, as having so largely concealed Him whom it sought to reveal. The Christ whom the Mediæval Church claimed to convey through its sacraments was the Divine "nature" as united with the "nature" of the frail and corruptible humanity it had assumed by incarnation; and the supremely efficacious form in which He was thought to be mediated was the "real presence" of His "body and blood" in the Mass. Thus the old system and its idea of grace, especially at this its highest point, were in terms of the sub-personal; whereas the new, with its emphasis on Faith as a relation between persons, realised "in the Spirit," was essentially and for all Christians personal and experimental.

Yet in fact the immediate results of the Reformation for Christological theory were at first inconsiderable, save among certain minor sects, among whom some suggestive, if rather crude, theorising[1] took place. The reasons for this were manifold. Chief among them was excessive deference to past tradition, at the point where Christian reverence was strongest, and where past influence of the relative forms of human thought upon the substance of faith, in its intellectual aspect, was least suspected. Further, the more experimental aspects of "salvation" for long absorbed Protestant thought. In Christological theory, then, Catholics and Reformed were still mostly at one. Yet the emphasis in the latter's experience of Christ was, in fact, changing,[2] especially where pietism prevailed—so preparing the ground for a fresh type of

[1] See Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*

[2] Dorner shows that from the fourth century to the Reformation, the Divine obscured the human Christ: from the Reformation down to the end of the seventeenth century, emphasis in Protestant circles fell more equally upon both, but without attaining real internal unity. The nearest to this was a modified theory, in one school of Lutherans, of "self-emptying" (*Kenosis*) as regards Christ's use of His divine powers.

Christology; witness the German pietists of the later seventeenth century. Nor must we forget other fresh veins of devout realism, visible for instance amongst the Quakers and in Pascal's vision of the Man Christ Jesus. All such Christians realised that orthodox Christology was too much a matter of abstract formulas, and had ceased to reckon seriously with the Spirit of God. On the other hand, Rationalism, born of the Renaissance and fed on the intellectual aspects of theology in the Scholastic period of controversy in the seventeenth century, turned in criticism on traditional Christology.

II

Modern Christologies

(*a*) Schleiermacher, the Pioneer

Both these tendencies met in Schleiermacher (1768-1834). He had felt the new æsthetic and idealistic spirit of Romanticism, and recoiled from the hard formalism of current orthodoxy. A man both of heart and head, he had learned from his early Moravian piety that absolute dependence on God, as revealed in religious experience, was the very life-breath of religion, of which the distinctive type was given in Christ's own historic person. A pioneer of the historic sense, Schleiermacher felt that "History, in the strictest sense, is the highest object of religion," since history is the realm of personality, and so of the most adequate revelation of the Divine. The personality of Christ, with its unique *filial* holiness, was to him the greatest of miracles, the most real of sacraments; and faith in Him was logically, as well as often experimentally, prior to belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Thus he helped to turn men to constructive historical study of the Gospels; and in general he marks the transition to the period with which we are to-day in living touch, when the deeper principles of the Reforma-

tion began consciously to be realised and carried to their legitimate issues.

It was only as the study of the New Testament itself became more historical, and so more close to the Christ of the Gospels and Apostolic faith, that real progress again became possible. Thought had, first, to lay afresh a sure basis in Biblical as distinct from Ecclesiastical Christology, for which the title "orthodox" was claimed: then it had to appraise and assimilate what of value the Church's history had to contribute to the elucidation and interpretation of Christ's person. This contribution proved to be largely negative in form, the setting aside of certain one-sided and aberrant hypotheses by the common consciousness, expressed in General Councils. But thus the path of true advance had been defined more clearly; and, further, there were left over some suggestive ideas which so-called "heretics" had thrown out in an unbalanced way, but which were of positive worth if only used aright. As regards the conceptions by which the ancient Catholic Church had related the fact of Christ to the universe of men and things, we have come to realise that whilst these were right in their intention, they may be in part a hindrance to-day, because not in terms of thought that is really ours. On the basis of such findings the task of modern theology, from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, has been to discover better methods of approach and better categories, growing out of the general progress of the human mind as influenced by Christ Himself. Here the *psychological or experimental* approach and the *philosophy of personality*—to which the greater poets, such as Tennyson and Browning, have made most valuable and significant contributions—are the great gains of modern as compared with ancient thought.

(*b*) Some Nineteenth-century Christologies

The general trend of Christology, its approach and categories, were anticipated by Schleiermacher. His

emphasis on religious experience, as the mirror in which Christ appears most truly, and on Jesus' own experience of God as His Father, reappears more or less independently in a series of Christian thinkers from about 1820. It began with Vinet, who owed valuable elements both to the Evangelical Revival, as felt in Switzerland, and to Pascal. In Britain Edward Irving, M'Leod Campbell, and the author of *Ecce Homo,* contributed each in his own way to a more real insight into the historic Jesus; while in America Horace Bushnell did the same, with special emphasis on Christ's moral perfection and filial consciousness. But most influential of all was Ritschl in Germany, soon after the middle of the century. He, however, not only emphasised the religious experience of the historic Jesus, but refused to go beyond it. Men are apt to "err in what they deny rather than in what they assert." Thus while his refusal to go behind "value judgments" as to the historical Jesus seems mistaken, we may agree that "Any Christology which does not begin with something in the nature of value-judgments is not Christian. . . . The Christian Gospel is, not that there has been an Incarnation, but that we may see God 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' " [1] To that extent He has for us, in Ritschl's famous phrase, "the religious value of God."

Ritschl stood in conscious contrast to "The Mediating School," which tried to do equal justice to the Church's historic Christology and to contemporary philosophy. Its first and most widely spread type favoured the "Kenotist" theory under various forms.[2] It will be best to dwell

[1] W. R. Matthews, as above, 110 f.

[2] Represented in England, rather later, by theologians like Fairbairn, Forrest, Forsyth, H. R. Mackintosh, on the one hand, and on the other, Gore, Moberly and Weston, among Anglicans. Long forgotten since its Apollinarian form was rejected by the Christian consciousness in A.D. 381, its main idea was revived by certain Lutheran theologians shortly before 1850. Doubtless the theory is at first sight attractive as a means of explaining the plain facts of Christ's early life, as lived within the psychological limits of normal manhood—facts brought home with fresh force by the historical method of Biblical study. This it seems to do without giving up

first on that aspect of the facts to which it does justice where traditional theory had most failed. To this school, Christ is "not so much God *and* man, as God in, and through, and as man. He is the one indivisible personality throughout. In His human life on earth as incarnate, He is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act, and every detail human. The Incarnate never leaves His Incarnation. God, as man, is always, in all things, God *as* man. . . . There are not two existences either of or within the Incarnate, side by side with one another. If it is all divine, it is all human too. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both."

This emphatic statement by so weighty an Anglo-Catholic theologian as Dr. Moberly, in his *Atonement and Personality* (p. 96), is notable in more than one way.[1] It not only marks the difference of accent, if not more, between ancient and modern Christology generally: it is also significant in that it occurs as part of an exposition of Christ's saving work—the work of experimental at-one-ment between man and God in terms of moral personality—to which the Reformation had directed attention anew. So viewed, the Incarnation bears most directly on the problem of human life; it is with sin, as "missing the mark" of life, that Christ and the uniqueness of His moral victory have essentially to do. In Christ two personal movements of will, God's in holy love and man's in loyal obedience, reach full and final unity, in a personality perfect in filial trust and love. His victory thus won, by the laws of moral personality, conditions like victory in others.

the traditional view that the person Logos or Son of God, while still exercising His universal functions, also became by a free conscious act the subject or *ego* of the man Christ Jesus. Whether it really satisfies all aspects of the case may appear in due course.

[1] How Moberly can escape the charge of Apollinarianism on lines true to traditional Christology, which makes the Logos the seat of personality in the man Jesus, it is hard to see.

Here we are approaching a Christology in terms alike of the need of man, as described in the opening of this volume, and of the Church's earliest experience. But the "Kenotists," do not, in fact, go thus far. For while they make the personality of the God-man human in form psychologically, they (like the orthodox Fathers) assume that the centre or *ego* of His self-consciousness is really a Divine "person"—the Logos mode or aspect of God —living now and henceforth within human limits, and so in a fresh form of consciousness. This, unless taken in a sense true in principle of the Logos-Son incarnate in all human personality, so far as it is "in the image of God," raises difficulties amounting to self-contradiction, from the side both of Godhead and manhood. It means *a new personal* centre of God's consciousness, Divine-human as distinct from purely Divine; and on the other hand, a manhood not itself *personal,* but only the limiting (physical and sense-determined) "measure of the self-consciousness . . . of the Divine Son as Incarnate" (Weston). Such conceptions, moreover, do not square with the psychological facts of the historic Christ. For not only must He have prayed to Himself as God, but He cannot really be an example and pledge of victory to manhood living under other moral and intellectual conditions. He becomes in fact not unique *as man,* but a type apart (one of the defects of Arianism) : nor is He the head of a new humanity essentially one and the same with Himself in having to reach moral perfecting through trial. All this compels Du Bose, who agreed with Moberly otherwise, to fall back on "a double personality in our one Lord," [1] if He was to be at once "perfect God" and "perfect man"—"the real and perfect expression of God humanly self-realised and manifested." It seems then that the only escape from the impasse is to distinguish the "person" (*hypostasis*) of the Logos, as a special mode of the personal life of God (and constituting the rational principle active in all finite or human persons), from the

[1] See Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern,* p. 94.

personality of Christ, as a concrete human person uniquely Divine in quality.

Here lies the *crucial differene between ancient and really modern theories of Christ,* the God-man, before whom Christian experience in all ages has bowed in adoration, as to God in His own proper person. The difference of theory is slight in one sense: in another it is of great moment, particularly for our sense of kinship with Christ, as our "pioneer-leader of Life." [1] Its recognition, too, prepares us to appreciate the advance made by the other wing of the Mediating School, contemporary with Ritschl and sharing most of his positive ideas, whose greatest name was August Dorner.

Starting from the opposite pole to that of traditional Christianity, with its stress on man's contrast to God, in virtue of his frail and limited nature (as Greek theology) and his sinfulness (as Latin theology), Dorner dwelt on man's essential kinship to God, in virtue of his spiritual capacity. "It is this *receptiveness* of humanity *for God,* when raised to its highest, absolute power, which provides for the existence of Jesus as 'the adequate personal organ of Deity.' " [2] Thus "The idea of the God-man, in whom both are perfectly united," is not only demanded by man's actual need of redemption from the universal sway of sin, but is provided for in the very creative idea of true humanity. Fixing on the *correlative ideas of God's self-*

[1] Since this was written, the point has been strongly put by Dr. C. E. Raven, in dealing with "Jesus the First-fruits of Mankind" (*The Quest for Religion,* p. 67). "If Jesus is not very man in the sense in which we are men, then He ceases to be the perfect translation of the eternal into terms of human life, and becomes a celestial invader whose triumphs do but mock us, and whom we are powerless to imitate and scarcely able to love or to understand. We cannot draw from His example any inferences as to our own nature. . . . 'The error,' says Sir Henry Jones, 'does not spring from maintaining the divinity of Jesus but from denying the divinity of man.' " The error in question is really that in which Catholic Christology was involved theoretically, when it placed the seat of Christ's personality, not like ours, in His humanity, but in that whereby He was other than us in kind, viz., absolute Deity as Personal Logos.

[2] H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ,* p. 272.

communicativeness as Logos and of man's receptivity towards the Logos, in virtue of the germ of Logos-nature within him, Dorner concentrates attention not on either "nature" separately and in itself (as "substance"), but on their union as a living interrelation in thought and will, a union involved in *all* human personality. In the personality of Christ such union existed in unique perfection of natural adjustment, resulting in an *unbrokenly* Divine-human consciousness as the Son of God, and a corresponding will of holy love to God and man. But *human* personality must be realised in a life-process—one in which the Logos is gradually imparted. So the Incarnation in Christ, says Dorner, "is not to be thought of as at once completed, but as continuous, nay increasing:" both sides contribute to the one self-conscious personality, as "the growing actual receptiveness of the humanity combines consciously and voluntarily with ever-new aspects of the Logos." "The life of Jesus was Divine-human at every point," to the fullest possible degree.

In all this Dorner has striking points of affinity with Theodore among Greek theologians; but advances beyond him in distinguishing the special nature (*hypostasis*) of the Logos element in the one personal God from "personality" as ordinarily understood. The Logos "is *in Himself* not a person in the same sense either as the absolute Divine personality or as an individual man." He supplies not so much the personality of Christ as *the basis* of its Divine quality—as indeed is the case with all true humanity, so far as by God's prevenient grace it attains the Divine likeness. Such a view points to the *form* of Christ's personality being *human in type* of consciousness, as also in moral growth, the Divine Logos contributing progressively (through the free receptivity of the human will) of its own spiritual content. Dorner, indeed, did not so phrase it explicitly; but both he and Ritschl rejected the one alternative modern theory, that of such a Kenosis [1] of knowledge and power as would fit the Divine

[1] Not merely one of outward condition or form, due to the body.

Logos-Son Himself to be the *ego* or centre of Christ's self-consciousness.

(*c*) More Recent Tendencies

The deeper tendencies of recent Christology, in its more constructive forms, are mainly continuous with Ritschl and Dorner, especially the latter. In Germany such a theologian as Martin Kähler was highly representative. He conceived the process of progressive union of the Divine and human elements in Christ, not as a blending of fixed "natures," but as due to "reciprocal interaction between two personal movements—generative activity on the side of the Eternal Godhead and a receptive activity on the side of Christ's humanity. In a progressive moral development the human soul of Jesus appropriated the contents of the life of the Godhead, and the God-man manifested His increasing unity with God in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly influence He exerted and exerts on the human race." [1] For to Kähler "Christology must be not only doctrine about the Saviour, but also about salvation."

Loofs observes that here the idea of Incarnation in Christ is, "in accordance with the tradition of the early Church, brought nearer to that of inspiration," but "abiding inspiration," due to the Divine Life being fully effective in the very root of Christ's personality. No attempt is made by either writer to analyse His Person, in order to ascertain what exactly constituted the "personality" in Jesus, though Kähler assumes that He possessed a human self-consciousness proper.[2] Loofs himself clearly makes the human *ego* of Christ the self-conscious seat or form of His personality. But he holds that "we can never penetrate so deep as to learn *how* God made him what He

[1] Loofs, *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* (p. 232).

[2] All this means a return to the historical Christ of the Synoptic Gospels in particular, and to the Hebrew idea of human personality as a psychological unity of both Divine and creaturely elements.

was," [1] namely one possessing unique knowledge of God as Father (Matt. xi. 27; cf. Luke x. 22) and perfect moral holiness.

Here we have the feature common to the whole school of recent "positive" or religiously affirmative Christology, viz., its sheer faith in the religious uniqueness of Jesus the Christ. This uniqueness, seen in His filial holiness in particular, it holds to be a fact verifiable by the experience of the insight of faith (as a function of the whole soul or person). It is also for faith a miracle, in the sense of a fact implying the direct action of God's transcendent will to create something beyond the result of His immanent working. More, it is the supreme form which such action by God in relation to man could take.[2]

Such recent English writers as W. L. Walker and Garvie, Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh, Rashdall, Temple and W. R. Matthews, who share the Church's attitude of unique trust in the Christ of the Gospels and of Christian experience, all view the Incarnation in Christ as the special climax of a Divine purpose of Incarnation of which humanity is itself the general or cosmic expression. Whilst God's immanent activity is involved in the very creation of a material world "outside" His own life, "the Incarnation is the consummation of the mystery of the relation between infinite and eternal God and a world of space and time." [3] It is, in fact, the final form of that principle of

[1] As Lotze said, it is vain to ask "how being is made." But that Christ was uniquely perfect in physical or purely creaturely constitution, as the Church assumed by its belief in His Virgin-birth—the symbol of a uniquely favourable physical nature—may confidently be postulated as involved in the later facts, *however* that condition came to be "given" by God (a point not strictly a matter of religious faith proper).

[2] As Du Bose says (*The Gospel according to St. Paul,* p. 300): "We find ourselves under a necessity of seeing in Jesus Christ from beginning to end an act of God in nature and in humanity. . . . And at the same time we are under an equal necessity of recognising in our Lord, as in ourselves, a human activity, the freest and most personal possible, the most determinative and constitutive of our own very selves."

[3] Garvie in *The Congregational Quarterly* for January, 1928.

"emergent evolution" which has recently, and for the first time, provided a real philosophy of evolution, one not only describing its "laws," but also assigning them a kindred sufficient cause.[1] God's self-giving in creation involves throughout, as its correlative idea and process, a self-realisation under new forms of being, rising in man to self-conscious personality, capable of the Divine quality of holy Love. These theologians agree, too, that the whole personality of Christ "is not something given at the start, by the existence side by side of the Divine and human natures, but something achieved by His life's action," *i.e.*, normally.[2] Subject to this, they would all say, with Dr. Temple, that in Him "God and man are *personally one*" in a sense not true of any other, prophet or saint. Difference emerges only when we ask: To which aspect of Christ's morally self-realised personality does His self-conscious *ego* properly belong, the Divine or the human? Catholic traditional theology answers unhesitatingly, the Divine: and those Protestants whose modes of thought and approach are in the end still determined by Patristic authority echo this reply, even when they recognise in Christ limited knowledge proper to the human form of consciousness. Thus Anglo-Catholics who admit, as even Dr. Mozley does, that Christ was "without full knowledge of science and history," and was not "always conscious of all He was"—particularly "of the fact that He could not sin"—still echo the ancient Christology [3] when they describe Him (with Bishop Weston) as "God self-conscious in manhood." So, too, apparently, Evangelical Kenotists, like Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh—if with more emphasis on the moral nature of the self-emptying of the Logos-Son, both as pre-existent and in His historic

[1] Cf. Scott Lidgett, *God, Christ, and the Church*, especially Chap. IX.

[2] J. K. Mozley, apropos of Forsyth, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, XII, p. 300. See further appended Note A at the end of the chapter, p. 185.

[3] See appended Note B, p. 185.

human life. On the other hand, Dr. Rashdall [1] with his uncompromising sense of the distinctness of human personality—as a moral self-consciousness not to be absorbed into personality in God, under any mode of His being, whether Logos [2] or other—placed the seat of Christ's personality decidedly in His humanity.

Dr. Temple's position in his *Christus Veritas* is peculiar, and seems hardly self-consistent. "As Person (the entirety of His spiritual being)," he writes, "Jesus is both Man and God." Yet "the Person of the Man Christ Jesus is God the Son"[3]—"person" here being used in the more limited sense, that of self-conscious subject or *ego*. But, again, there being "two wills in the Incarnate, . . . His *human nature comes* through struggle and effort to an ever deeper *union with the Divine,* in completeness of self-sacrifice." Whose, we ask, is the moral effort? Surely it is of Christ's human consciousness or *ego,* subordinating itself as a person [3] to the Father's will. For we cannot predicate moral progress of God the Son. The logical conclusion would seem to be that Christ's moral person or self-conscious *ego* was the man Jesus, rather than the indwelling Logos, though it was to the latter's influence —God's Spirit of "life," as Christ thought of it—operative in unique fulness, that His whole historic person owed its unique Divine sonship.

Dr. Raven [4] pursues the more modern of the lines taken by Dr. Temple—that proper to the modern idea of "per-

[1] See his *Life* by P. E. Matheson, *e.g.*, pp. 246 foll. The importance of Rashdall's Christology has been obscured by the rather piecemeal form of his writing on the subject, as is shown by the absence of his very name from the histories by H. R. Mackintosh and Cave. But his weighty authority, as a theologian who was equally historian and philosopher, lies behind the views of Dr. Raven and Dr. Matthews, as well as the "modern Christology" outlined below in Chapter VIII.

[2] See appended Note C, p. 186.

[3] The "real human will or personality," through which the Divine will in Christ comes morally to revelation, Dr. Temple goes on boldly to describe as *per se* (apart from the incarnate Logos) "a man."

[4] *The Quest for Religion* (1928), pp. 70 f., from the chapter on "Jesus, the First-fruits of Mankind."

sonality," both in man and God—without falling back like him, at the critical point, on the traditional one which virtually annuls it. He asserts "at once the unique divinity of Jesus and His full manhood. His relation to us will be that of the 'perfect round' to the 'broken arcs.' . . . Incarnation will differ from inspiration, but in degree not in kind. In Jesus will be the fulness of the Logos of which we, by virtue of our humanity, possess what Justin Martyr called 'seeds.' " But even he does not put and answer the ultimate problem in its crucial form, viz., which nature is the form and seat of Christ's historic personality, the true subject of His unique Sonship to God and brotherhood to men—in a word, of His character? This, however, is the question to which the modern Christian consciousness demands a plain answer; and that primarily in the interests, not of abstract theology, but of practical religion. To have saving "value" for us men, Christ must be one whose moral triumph as man gives us a real basis for like victory as men. In order to assure us that such is the case, He must be the revelation of true manhood quite as much as of Godhood: and above all, of their normal spiritual relations summed up in "Grace," as Divine inspiration, enabling man to realise his potential personality as Divine sonship. Of such manhood Christ, the second Adam, is the archetype and inspiring Head.

And so we come finally to Dr. Sanday's suggestive use [1] of the distinction between the conscious and subconscious (or "subliminal") life of the human soul. "A man," said Augustine, "contains something which not even the spirit of the man, that is in him, knows." It is from the "abysmal depths of human consciousness" (Augustine's own phrase) that the divinest and most transforming aspirations emerge (through the action of God as Logos) into our consciousness as inspirations, unsought by us,

[1] See, in particular, his *Personality in Christ and Ourselves,* where he answers criticisms of his view (*e.g.,* by H. R. Mackintosh, *op. cit.,* pp. 487 ff.) as set forth in *Christologies Ancient and Modern.* See appended Note D, p. 186.

and indeed often resisted by our habitual will. This fact helps us to explain the strange dualism of ordinary human nature. And it does so by return to the Hebraic conception of man as being essentially open, in the depths of his being, to God's living and life-giving inspiration, His Spirit-influence, or Logos-influence—as the Greek preferred to conceive it.

In this light the filial personality of Christ, as at once *the* Son of Man and *the* Son of God, is the archetype of the new and true humanity [1] after the Divine creative idea and purpose, yet an archetype realised under particular historic forms, as a real human personality must be. As such He becomes the enabling condition of the opening of men's souls—which on the plane of mere nature are self-centred and unreceptive of God—more fully to the transforming influence of the immanent action of God as Holy Spirit.[2]

III

Retrospect and Conclusion

To such a Christology, in its vital or experimental aspect, the inmost consciousness of the Church has ever borne its witness. That witness has been best expressed in the spontaneous forms of prayer and poetry; and never more adequately than in the Modern Period, both in its hymns and in reflective poets like Tennyson and Browning. The Church's special witness is only made the more impressively universal by the very diversity of high Christologies, to which Christians of all types have been prompted by their common personal faith. "Our little systems have their day," alike in philosophy and in its application to

[1] We have already noted (p. 135) how, even in the Fourth Gospel Jesus declares His own knowledge of things Divine to depend on the normal psychological and moral conditions for man as man. And conversely, the same Gospel records words in which Jesus views men receptive of "the word of God," and so sharing the Divine life, as "gods" or Divine in spiritual quality, *i.e.*, the sons of God.

[2] See Note F, p. 189.

the theoretic interpretation of Christ: "they cease to be" for living Christianity, though not without adding their quota of testimony and suggestion to the witness of the ages. "We," said Bacon, "are the Ancients" in experience; and for the modern Church Christ's personality still towers over the ages, unchanging and self-evidencing, uniquely human, uniquely Divine.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou seemest human and Divine,
The highest, holiest manhood Thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

The will is the key to truth for life. It is here that Christ is revealed as "the Lord of Life" for men to-day, as at the first, in that He is the supreme historic source of "holy Spirit." From His personality radiates full motive power to live as children of God, "ruling" creatively all the forces of nature around and within us, so that they subserve rather than frustrate the ends of personality—itself the final end, alike for God and man. So seen, Christ is the revelation of true manhood no less than of true Godhood, of a manhood as universal and "eternal" in quality as God, its kindred source. As the universal ideal of humanity realised in an individual man, the second and "life-giving" Adam, He is unique, *the* Son of Man: and as such, He is also *the* Son of God, the proper object of devotion and adoration for the failing and sinful sons of men.[1]

[1] See appended Note E, p. 187.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII

NOTE A.—Forsyth stresses the moral nature of the pre-temporal *Kenosis* involved in the Incarnation in Christ. But *all* incarnation of the Logos mode of Godhead, such as is implied in the creation of men as God's "offspring" (Acts xvii. 28), means a moral act of *Kenosis* in God (a humbling of His nature to finite relations with matter, sensation, human consciousness and free-will). Hence the fact that the man Christ Jesus, as constituted through Divine *Kenosis* under special conditions, became the uniquely holy or Divine personal "Image" or "Son" of God, does not prove that the pre-temporal moral act was in His case wholly different in kind, save in what Ritschl calls His unique "vocation" by God. In particular, it cannot prove the Divine basis of Christ's personality to be psychologically the personal Logos, while in other human beings it is only His "nature" in a less personal sense, viz., as rational or spiritual principle of the human *ego*. Here we touch, in any case, a *profound mystery,* that of the genesis of *human* rational self-consciousness at all. But surely we must leave it at that, *in both* cases alike. For the same reason one may doubt the value of Dr. Mozley's antithesis, when he says that "in Christ we have to do, not with God's plenipotentiary, but with God's real presence." God's real "plenipotentiary," one fully sharing His moral nature, can be such only as being in a unique sense God present in and as Man (cf. Moberly above).

NOTE B.—Dr. J. K. Mozley (*Essays Catholic and Critical,* p. 194) in a defence of the Chalcedonian Chris-

tology, *i.e.*, the traditional type, as possessing more than an historical value, frankly recognises its unsatisfactoriness on the philosophical side, as a thinkable theory or doctrine of the person of Christ. "A doctrine of Christ's Person," he writes, "that approached adequacy and completeness would go along with a satisfactory doctrine of personality. Such a doctrine did not exist in the fourth and fifth centuries." He then goes on to say that even to-day "the stage of an agreed solution has not yet been reached," but that if the beginnings of a philosophy (which he seems to recognise as present in modern thought) are "further developed, theologians may find avenues of insight into the Christological problem opening out before them from the side of metaphysics." But if so, the result may well be to change the Church's thought as to which nature, the Logos or the humanity in Christ, should be viewed as the proper seat of His personality.

NOTE C.—It is important, if the Logos idea is to have living meaning to modern minds, to recognise its different possible senses and not to identify it simply with the conception of it dominant when it was used to mould ancient Christological doctrine. In Greek philosophy ultimate reality or being (essence) was spoken of, and largely thought of, in terms of "substance" (based on the material aspect of our experience), rather than of "subject" or self-conscious thought and will. The latter, however, is the only proper source of personal action, such as effected the human salvation set forth in the New Testament. There "the Incarnation was an act of God for man's redemption, and the act was the whole life" of Christ. Dr. Matthews (*op. cit.*, p. 103) goes on to show how to-day "dynamic" conceptions are replacing "static" ones, not only in physics but also in philosophy. Thus, as revealed in and to created beings, the Divine is to be conceived as "Thought which is also Act"—so uniting the Logos and Spirit modes of Deity.

NOTE D.—Sanday does not regard the "subliminal" as *per se* superior to the supraliminal: suggestions both of "the flesh" and of "the spirit" arise in that sphere, though from different sources. But perhaps he does not make the best possible use of his idea, through using "subconscious" too much in the sense of "unconscious," whereas it has also a sense intermediate between this and "fully conscious." This twilight sphere, in which great and far-reaching ideas "emerge," first faintly and then more clearly, is the most significant aspect of our human experience. Such emergence, often sudden and over-powering, characterises the finest intuitions of an artistic and philosophic nature, as well as of the religious: but in the last it is supremely significant. In the "receptivity" through which our consciousness grows and deepens, a certain passivity to the influence of the spiritual "Beyond that is within" precedes all reaction of our conscious self. And it is in religion that this fact most clearly testifies to the transcendent source of such higher impressions and perceptions. It is there that, as moral truth, they often run counter to the actual desires of the will, and so awaken a strong sense of contrast and "otherness," combined with shame and self-reproach in view of what we really are. Then comes the sense that we "ought" to be like that other and higher kind of self thus revealed ("in us yet not of us") by a creative activity in spiritual contact with us, impressing on "conscience" its higher tendency. For a full working out of this line of thought, see Gaston Frommel, *The Psychology of Christian Faith* (S.C.M. 1928).

NOTE E.—*Prof. Matthews' Christology.*—Since the above was written, Prof. W. R. Matthews, in his essay in *The Future of Christianity,* has expressed a view as to the person of Christ essentially akin to the above reading of the history of Christology and its results for faith to-day. "Is there," he writes, "any reason why Christians

should hesitate to affirm that there is a Divine activity at the root of every human soul" (one analogous, that is to that in Christ)[1] "It is feared, perhaps, that along this line of thought we should represent Jesus as a 'mere man.' But are we sure that . . . any one of us is 'merely man.' The most orthodox doctrine is that Jesus reveals to us not only God but man: He is the New Adam, who shows what humanity truly is" in essential constitution. "We need not fear that we shall dethrone Jesus from His rightful Lordhip by seeking to understand His kinship with ourselves"—so long as we hold fast to the experienced fact of His *uniqueness* as man, taken seriously and not as a mere phrase. "Though the Divine Thought [= Logos] or Act [= Spirit] is indeed the ground of our being, it is in us frustrated, overwhelmed by negativity [all in "the flesh" which beguiles the *ego* into egoism], unexpressed in any fulness because of our sins. In Jesus the Divine Logos [active in and through the subconscious side of our receptivity] shines through[1] all the acts and thoughts of the empirical ego. We find in Him a human life and character completely unified by unwavering obedience to the Father's will, and illuminated by an unclouded consciousness of the Divine presence. In Him we find the continual triumph over negativity even through suffering."

That is, the form of Christ's personality is human, but its spiritual content is qualitatively Divine, in virtue of its uniquely perfect receptivity, its unbroken filial attitude. Thus as perfect "Son of Man" Christ is and is revealed as unique "Son of God."

[1] To the objection that, so conceived, "a part only of the Divine Thought which is also Act found expression in Jesus," Dr. Matthews replies that spatial and material modes of thought do not hold good of Spirit. "We cannot divide the Pure Act which is the cause of all empirical reality": "the Word of God fully revealed in the Person and the Life of Jesus is not a part of the Word of God: He is the same Word 'through whom the worlds were made' "—and whose activities, we may add, are "recapitulated," or summed up in Christ, as Head of Nature and human history.

NOTE F.—In this conception of the immanent presence of God as Holy Spirit the Old Testament "Word" and "Spirit" modes of Divine revelation and action blend in one and give us the New Testament synthesis of Eternal Life, absolute and Divine.

PART IV
CHRIST TO-DAY

CHAPTER VIII
A CHRISTOLOGY IN MODERN TERMS

D. Miall Edwards

SYNOPSIS

Introduction. Christian experience prior to Christian doctrine and more important. Yet intellectual reflection a necessary part of the experience.

I. The Need for New Categories.

The task of reinterpretation recognised in the past. The need of a modern attempt: not isolating our experience of Christ from the rest of our experience or knowledge of the world: yet taking full account of the unique elements in Christian experience.

II. The Categories that are Available.

The contribution of the main branches of modern study to our intellectual equipment. Physics, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Ethics, Philosophy yield such principles as Natural Law, Evolution, Personality, the Social Consciousness, Value, Immanence and Transcendence.

III. The Foundation Principles for Restatement.

(1) *The Jesus of History.* The character of Jesus rather than the "two natures" our starting-point. (2) *His true and full humanity.* The traditional tendency to "Docetism" has no support in the Gospels and no attraction to the modern mind. (3) *His unique relation to God:* (*a*) His filial consciousness and intimate acquaintance with the Father: (*b*) His sovereign authority and sense of unique vocation in relation to the Kingdom of God. (4) *But He did not identify Himself with God,* as if the Father and the Son were one and the same. He spoke of God as Another and prayed to the "Lord of heaven and earth" as to One beyond Himself. (5) *Yet He came to have the value of God* to religious experience, while not formally and consistently identified with God. (6) *The problem for us:* how to do justice both to the human and to the Divine in Christ, while at the same time preserving the unity of His Person?

IV. The Resulting Doctrine.

(*a*) The Relation of Christ to the Godhead.

The obvious alternatives if Christ's Divinity is to be held, are (1) To identify Christ absolutely with God (*Sabellianism*); (2) To regard them as separate Divine Beings (*Ditheism*): (3) The Church rejected both and sought a *via media* in the idea of two "hypostases" within the one divine "substance": an unstable equilibrium; (4) *Christ's Divinity stated in Modern Terms: i.e.,* in terms of ethical value. His identity of character and purpose with God. The question of His pre-existence.

(*b*) The Relation of the Divine to the Human in Christ.

The traditional doctrine based on their mutual incompatibility reduces their union in One Person to a paradox.

(1) *The Difference between God and Man.* God's self-subsistence and universality. Over-emphasis of difference leads either to (i) dualism of persons in Christ (Nestorianism), or to (ii) the divinisation of human nature (Monophysitism). (2) *The Affinity between God and Man:* (*a*) *Moral affinity.* Goodness and love are essentially the same in God and man. (*b*) *Metaphysical affinity.* There is an element of time in God's eternal life, and an element of eternity in man's temporal life. The Infinite and the finite are ever drawing towards each other: God communicating Himself to and craving for man; man craving for and capable of receiving God. (3) *The Incarnation,* the perfect fulfilment of these two movements. It is a progressive, spiritual *achievement,* not a mechanical act complete from the first. How far was Christ's Divinity also a native *endowment.* The subconscious mind: the element of given-ness." The dualism of the two natures transcended. *Christ's uniqueness.*

CHAPTER VIII

A CHRISTOLOGY IN MODERN TERMS

THERE is need to-day of a fresh doctrinal interpretation of Christ in the light of what He has meant and still means for Christian experience, yet in terms of modern knowledge. We recognise that it is the experience itself, and not theories *about* the experience or its object, that is the primary and dynamic thing. Experience always comes before doctrine. It has been well said that "in the story of the Christian Church, doxology comes before dogma." Doctrine without experience is as valueless as paper money not backed by coin or bullion. And here we mean more than one's own individual experience. We mean also the collective experience of the whole Christian community, which is richer and more inclusive than the experience of even the ripest individual Christian. There is always "something more" for the individual to reach forth to, in order that he may "apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 18):

> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for? [1]

Nevertheless, though the experience of Christ as Redeemer and Lord is what matters most, we are driven by the inner compulsion of our rational nature to seek to make clear the content of that experience by formulating its doctrinal implications. In one of his famous aphorisms Bradley

[1] Robert Browning, *Andrea del Sarto.*

defines metaphysics as "the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct," but he adds that the finding of reasons is itself an instinct.[1] Certainly to think out the implications of our experience of Christ is a necessity of our nature. And the doctrinal articulation reacts on the experience itself, and helps both to enrich it and to free it from spurious elements.

In fact intellectual reflection on the contents of experience is part of the experience itself and not a mere contemplation of it from without. Within the unity of experience three elements are usually distinguished—feeling, will and thought (or more technically, affection, volition and cognition). This traditional analysis of consciousness is useful so long as it is borne in mind that the three elements never function in isolation, and that each is present in every phase of experience, though with varying degrees of intensity. Similarly in our experience of Christ we may distinguish the following three attitudes, broadly corresponding to the three constituents of all consciousness just mentioned: (i) Appreciation of Christ's worth for us, inner consciousness of His presence and power and value. (ii) A type of behaviour or conduct in harmony with this appreciation; the full Christian experience is not a mere mystic emotion hidden away in the seclusion of the "heart," but issues in a life of uttermost loyalty to Christ in the sphere of conduct. (iii) Intellectual reflection on the beliefs implied in such appreciation and loyalty. Such reflection is, we repeat, an aspect of the Christian experience itself and not a mere detached study of it from without. The work of thought will be both intensive and extensive. By its intensive task we mean our experience of Christ reflecting on its own content, with a view to making explicit and objective the truths implied in the subjective experience. By its extensive work we mean the attempt to relate the truths implied in the specifically Christian experience to the truths implied in our total experience of life and the world;

[1] F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (1893), Preface.

for Christian experience, if it is to be valid, must form a coherent part of the total organism of experience. Whether intensive or extensive, doctrine has for its aim the interpretation of experience, while at the same time it falls within experience in the wider sense.

And the work of thought is never finished. Doctrine grows with the growth of experience. If it becomes standardised and stereotyped into rigid, immutable forms, it tends to become obsolete and to lose touch with contemporary life and thought. Thus it is that to-day we are driven to take up afresh the problem of the Person of Christ in the full light of modern knowledge. Men still find in Christ the supreme manifestation of the power and goodness and love of God, and of the meaning and purpose of human life. But there is need of a restatement of the doctrine of His Person in modern terms.

I

The Need for New Categories

Our first task will be to search for categories by means of which we may be able to establish a vital connection between our doctrine and the modern intelligence. The old categories have to-day largely lost their meaning, because they belong to a thought-world and are steeped in a technique which we have outgrown. Such categories are mainly those derived from (i) pre-Christian Jewish thought; (ii) Greek or Hellenistic philosophical thought; (iii) the semi-metaphysical, semi-legalistic thought of the old Latin and the mediæval world. The Church soon outgrew the Jewish terms and categories (*e.g.*, "Messiah") by which the earliest Christians sought to give expression to their faith in Christ, and proceeded to translate them into thought-forms that would be intelligible to the cultured people of the Græco-Roman world. To present the claims of Jesus Christ in terms of the Messianic idea or of the Kingdom of God in the Jewish sense (whether in

the sense of the O.T. prophets or of the later apocalyptic writings) would convey no meaning to the great non-Jewish world into which the Gospel soon found its way in its adventurous career of world-conquest. Hence we find the work of translation or reinterpretation already beginning in the New Testament. The idea of the Messiah was soon translated into its spiritual equivalent "Lord," which had the advantage of being intelligible both to the Jew (for it was the word used of Yahveh in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament) and to the Greek and Roman (for it was often used for the "Saviour-God" in the Mystery Religions and of the Roman Emperor regarded as Divine). But the term "Lord" again, though satisfying the more immediate religious requirements, proved inadequate under the stress of the speculative need of defining more fully the relation of the Lord Jesus Christ to God and to the whole historic and cosmic process. Hence in the New Testament itself Christ is described by such Hellenistic categories as "image of the invisible God," "first-born of all creation," "the impress of God's substance," "the Logos," as Divine agent of creation and the indwelling light of all men.

After New Testament times the process of reinterpreting Christ in terms derived from Greek philosophy proceeded apace, reaching its culmination in the great Creeds of the fourth and fifth centuries, notably the Nicene Creed, which declared the Son to be "of one substance" (*homoousion*) with the Father; the Definition of Chalcedon, which defined His incarnate Person in the formula "two natures in one Person"; and the "Athanasian" Creed, which defined His relation to God and His incarnate Person in corresponding Latin terms. For many centuries afterwards, orthodox theology in the main found these definitions and terms quite adequate for the purposes of a general framework for Christian thought. But our world-view has been so revolutionised, largely by modern science and philosophy, that the terms and categories derived from ancient Greek philosophy and Roman law

have ceased to convey much meaning to the mind of today. They presuppose a background of experience and knowledge which is no longer common property, or which has been superseded by a very different background. This is true, for instance, of the philosophical ideas "Logos" and "substance." Hence the need of new categories more organically related to living contemporary thought.

Our categories, then, must be *modern, i.e.,* they must be such as are meaningful and effective in other realms of modern thought. But this statement needs some qualification. As it stands, it might be taken to mean that the Christian experience should be interpreted in terms derived from sub-Christian experience with categories which have, for specific purposes, been fashioned by science and philosophy without regard to religious values, or independently of the Christian standpoint. This was what in fact happened in the case of the Old Christology, couched as it was in terms of an alien philosophy which arose independently of Christianity and in the main prior to the Christian era. We should so far as possible avoid a repetition of this mistake: for we can never adequately interpret the higher in terms of the lower, or do justice to the loftiest reaches of human experience by forcing them into a framework supplied by thought working on the lower planes of experience. We know how Anselm's closely reasoned scheme of Atonement fell short of the level of the richest Christian experience because he framed it so largely on purely logical lines, "leaving Christ and our knowledge of Him out of account." [1] We must not first build our world-view on the basis of a merely "secular" science and philosophy, *remoto Christo,* and then force Christ into a scheme framed and finished without reference to Him. Rather must our experience of Christ, containing as it does something unique and not derivable from other sources, be regarded as supplying

[1] "Remoto Christo . . . quasi nihil sciatur de Christo," *Cur Deus Homo,* Preface.

us with a vitally important part of the data which are to be taken into account in forming our framework of thought and our philosophy of reality. We must not allow the sciences to "dictate terms" from below to Christian thought, which can claim relative independence within its own realm in view of the unique character of the experience which it seeks to interpret. On the other hand, neither must our doctrine of Christ be based upon "religious" experience in any exclusive sense, that is in complete isolation from the rest of our experience and in complete disregard of the sciences and philosophies which seek to give a rational account of the "secular" experience of men. For experience is ultimately one and indivisible —though containing within it an infinite diversity of aspects; and therefore our scientific experience of the world and our religious experiences of God in Christ must somehow "hang together" within the coherent unity of experience as a whole. We must so interpret the truth of our Christian faith that we find for it an integral place within the whole organism of life and knowledge. Thus only can its vitality be tested and its truth vindicated. Organic coherency within the totality of experience is really our ultimate criterion of truth. So, like all kinds of immediate experience, our immediate awareness of Christ needs to be critically interpreted in the light of our ever widening knowledge of the universe. For that purpose we must use categories that are true and vital for us to-day.

II

The Categories Available To-day

Our first task, therefore, is to consider the main categories or principles of modern knowledge, in so far as this is necessary in order that we may find a background to our attempt to construct a Christology. Let us very briefly consider some of the main branches of study, with

a view to discovering what contribution each has made to our equipment of intellectual tools or instruments of thought which can be used in Christological construction.

1. *Physical Science* has given us a conception of *law and uniformity* which is universally accepted as a postulate and presupposition of modern thought. Science has accustomed us to the idea of the Reign of Law which is omnipresent, universal, coextensive with the whole range of the physical universe. In all his work the scientist assumes the principle of the unity and universality of nature; and though such a principle can never be inductively proved (that would imply that all the facts of the vast universe had been exhaustively surveyed), it is found to justify itself in practice, because it "works" and leads to more and more fruitful results. What the ideas of law and uniformity really imply is the unity and rationality of the universe. And this is just what was meant by the Greek and Hellenistic conception of Logos, save only that to the Greeks the Logos was a priniciple of *a priori* philosophical speculation, whereas the modern idea of law is a category of scientific research. But science cannot tell us what is the nature of the ultimate principle which gives unity, rationality and meaning, to the universe as a whole, though it seems to suggest that there *is* such a principle. Christian experience implies that the unity is *spiritual,* and that its nature and principle are revealed and incarnated in Christ. Paul, starting from his experience of the exalted Christ, arrived at the bold conception that in Christ all things cohere (Col. i. 15 ff.; cf. John i. 1 ff.). At any rate if, as science has taught us, the world is a whole, then Christ must be an integral part of it, and our experience of Him must cohere with or be organic to our experience of the world generally.

2. From *biology* we have derived the *idea of evolution.* "Law" and "uniformity," taken by themselves, suggest a static universe. They do not necessarily include the

idea of change. But evolution suggests a changing and dynamic universe, a world which is ever in process of becoming. This does not mean that the ideas of law and unity have been abandoned, but that they have been included within a wider conception. For evolution, too, is according to law and is a process within the unity of the world as a whole. But it allows for the emergence of new values within the time-process without breach of continuity. Here again, for the Christian consciousness Christ holds the key to the deeper meaning of the whole evolutionary movement. "All things are *unto* Him," as well as "in Him." He is the Omega as well as the Alpha, the goal as well as the first principle of the cosmic process, viewed from the standpoint of Divine purpose. We are aware of the fact that we are now raising the idea of evolution above its merely scientific or naturalistic plane and giving it a spiritual and teleological content. But that is just what our Christian experience compels us to do. And with regard to the problem of the Incarnation the idea of evolution helps us to do two things: (1) It helps us to find a place for the Jesus of history within the setting of the whole evolutionary scheme teleologically understood, *i.e.,* to interpret Him as the emergence of a new quality in history without breach of continuity, a natural-supernatural Person, a miracle in accordance with law (as every new quality may be said to be, relatively to that which lies beneath it in the process of "emergent evolution"). It enables us to see Jesus, not in sheer isolation, but in the context of universal history, and as the culmination of the whole cosmic process regarded as the gradual unfolding of the Divine purpose. (2) It helps us to understand the Incarnation, not (as in the old theology) as a static unity of two static "natures" or entities in one Person, but as somehow a growing, progressing, dynamic fact. To this point we return later.

3. *Psychology* has given us a new interest in human *personality,* and a new understanding of what personality

means. The words "person" means much more to us to-day, at least means something more concrete and empirical, than its nearest Greek equivalent "hypostasis" or the Latin word "persona" did to those who formulated the ecclesiastical dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The term "hypostasis" (generally translated "person" in the creeds) never quite lost its literal and original meaning of "substance" (cf. Heb. i. 3, R.V.) conceived as a metaphysical entity of substratum which lies beneath all our conscious experiences and which constitutes our permanent ego. But modern psychology has abandoned this empty abstraction and concentrated on the concrete, conscious, experiencing and experienced, self-determining activity which constitutes our living personality. Its working categories have been *experience* and *consciousness* (and more recently *behaviour*) rather than bare "being" or "substance" or "soul" as a metaphysical entity. The result is that the Chalcedonian doctrine of "two natures in one Person," with its corollary of Christ's "impersonal human nature," to us lacks psychological reality and meaning.[1] The distinction between "human nature" and "human person" seems to us strained, artificial and abstract. Self-conscious and self-directed *personality* is essential to any adequate definition of human *nature*. That is partly why there is

[1] There have been recent attempts to revive the old doctrine, first clearly stated by Leontius of Byzantium in the sixth century, that Christ's human nature was without independent personality of its own, and only became personal in the Person of the Divine Logos. So H. M. Relton in his *A Study in Christology* (1917). This is technically known as the doctrine of Enhypostasia; cf. J. K. Mozley in his Essay on "The Incarnation" in *Essays Catholic and Critical* (1926), where he makes a distinction between "human experiences and a human subject of experiences" (p. 193). But this idea of a conscious, rational "nature" as in itself impersonal, and only finding its personality in that of another conscious, rational "Nature" (or, in Mr. Mozley's terminology, the idea of human experiences without a human subject) seems too scholastic and unpsychological for the modern mind to be able to assimilate. We cannot believe that the modern intelligence can acquiesce in such overdrawn subtleties as a human nature without human personality, or human experiences without a human subject. Such a conception rather reminds us of the grin of the Cheshire cat without the cat, in *Alice in Wonderland.*

such widespread dissatisfaction among Christian thinkers to-day with the doctrine of "two natures" in Christ. Our reconstruction of the doctrine of Christ's Person must be in line with our modern understanding of personality in terms of such categories as consciousness, experience, will or purposive activity, rather than in terms of an abstract metaphysical "substance" or "nature" or "hypostasis," without psychological content. And even the still more modern "New Psychology," with its researches in the realm of the subconscious or unconscious mind and of our inborn instincts, may give us certain clues to the mystery of Christ's Person which we must not neglect. As far back as 1857 the late Archbishop Temple wrote: "Our theology has been cast into a scholastic mould, *i.e.*, all based on Logic. We are in need of and are gradually being forced into a theology based on psychology." [1] Schleiermacher a century ago started the revolution, when he interpreted Christ's Person in terms of His "God-consciousness" instead of in terms of His "natures." We, too, must start with His conscious experience of personal relation to God the Father. The change from the patristic and scholastic Christology to the modern is due to our more realistic and empirical psychological insight into personality as a conscious process.

4. A word must be said about *Sociology*, which has brought into prominence the important category of the *social consciousness* as essential to personality. Sociology has helped us to realise that there is no such thing as a mere individual, that personality can only be realised in society, where there is community of interests and fellowship and co-operation. If we may avail ourselves of a metaphor used by Ritschl in another connection, personality may be described as an ellipse with two foci, the individual and society. Or better perhaps, the

[1] Quoted in *Foundations* (1913), p. 226.

individual is the focus, while society is the circle without which the focus would become a mere vanishing point. The personality even of Jesus did not develop "in a vacuum," but in a particular social *milieu,* prepared for it in the wise dispensation of Providence. He came not to destroy but to fulfil what He found of value in the social heritage into which He entered, especially the heritage of the prophetic and apocalyptic religion of Israel. And His own individual contribution was in turn transmitted down the ages (not without changes) by and within the community, especially the Christian Church.

5. *Ethics* gives us an interpretation of personality from the point of view of its *moral* content and ideal. It views personality not merely (like psychology) as consciousness or experience, but as self-conscious experience controlled by a responsible will realising moral purposes. We believe that *personality ethically conceived* is the highest category both for philosophy and for Christian theology. And the effort of modern Christology has been more and more in the direction of ethicising the doctrine of Christ's Person, on the basis of a more moral conception both of God and of man. If we are to hope to solve the problem of the unity of the Divine and the human in Christ, we must understand both God and man in the light of moral values revealed in the life and character of Jesus. This means, on the one hand, a return to the Biblical conception of *God* as moral will—as righteousness and love—in place of the Greek conception of Him (which underlay the ancient creeds) as bare "Being," defined mainly in negative terms such as infinity, immortality, immutability, impassibility. "Moral values" are our best clue to the meaning of "the idea of God." On the other hand, it means that *man,* too, is to be conceived as essentially a moral personality, created in God's image and made for communion with God. This will help us to understand the Incarnation as the culmination of two personal movements—the movement

of God towards man, responded to by man's movement towards God—rather than (to put it crudely) a metaphysical piecing together of two intrinsically incompatible natures.

6. Has *modern philosophy* any categories to offer us for our Christological task? Whereas the special sciences are concerned with particular *aspects* of experience, philosophy has for its subject-matter the *whole* of experience, and seeks to apprehend the ultimate nature and meaning of the whole. It has been said that "there is no modern philosophy, there are only modern philosophers." [1] This is largely true; but we believe there is a strong movement in the direction of a philosophy which promises to do justice to the implications of Christian experience and to support a framework for our Christology. We can only barely mention the main principles of such a philosophy.[2]

(*a*) There is first of all the category of *value,* which bids fair to become an ultimate metaphysical principle. Value is in the first instance an economic category (related to but distinguished from "price"), whence it passes to psychology, where it has reference to subjective individual desire and its satisfaction. That is felt by us to have value, which is capable of satisfying our desire. It then becomes an ethical—or more comprehensively, a normative—principle, having reference to that which *ought* to satisfy man as such, as distinguished from that which actually satisfies the desire of a given individual in a given mood. "A man may be satisfied when he is drunk, but his satisfaction is not satisfactory" (Bosanquet). Thus,

[1] W. R. Matthews, *Studies in Christian Philosophy* (1921), p. 76.

[2] For a full exposition see such books as James Ward, *The Realm of Ends* (1911); A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* (1917); W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God* (1918). For his own views the present writer may be allowed to refer to his book *The Philosophy of Religion* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1924).

value comes to mean that which transcends mere individual or momentary desire and its satisfaction, that which has intrinsic desirability, satisfactoriness, goodness, when judged in the light of some universal and objective criterion. Hence we are led to the metaphysical principle of the objectivity of values, and their validity as revelations of the nature of ultimate reality. Our highest human values are found not only to be subjectively satisfying but to be authentic witnesses to the nature of things. Thus from being a mere psychological category, "value" becomes a metaphysical one.

(*b*) Then there is the principle, already implied, of *gradation* of values. All values are not equally valuable, *i.e.*, not equally satisfying and satisfactory. It is becoming a commonplace in modern philosophy that there are different levels or orders of reality, which can be graded according to an ascending scale of worth.[1] It is usual to find this hierarchy in the structure of reality culminating in the trinity of intrinsic and underivable values, the Good, the True, the Beautiful. But may we not advance further, and say with Plato that the ultimate value of the universe, that of which all others are means or modes, is the idea of the Good? And may we not go still further and say with Christianity that the soul of Goodness is Love? Ultimate Reality, then, is Love, and "God is Love." Nothing is good intrinsically and without qualification, taught Kant, save the good will. The absolutely Good Will (God) is thus the Absolute Value of the Universe. Now values have meaning only in a universe in which personality is the highest category, for a thing can have value only for a person. And Jesus Christ is the highest and best personality in history. He

[1] See *e.g.*, Bishop Temple's *Christus Veritas* (1924), Chapters I and II, and more fully S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity* (2 vols., 1920); C. Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution* (1923); Viscount Haldane, *The Reign of Relativity* (1921).

is thus the best key to the nature of reality. He not only *taught* love, but incarnated it, lived it, *was* it. He thus revealed God to be essentially Love.

(*c*) In this principle of gradation we have the reconciliation of *immanence* and *transcendence*. Modern thought is very familiar with the idea of immanence, largely through the influence of Hegelianism. And the category of immanence ought to prove most useful to us in our endeavour to construct a modern Christology, especially in so far as immanence implies the affinity of God and man. But immanence by itself is merely a principle of unity without differentiation, and leads to Pantheism. Where God is equally in everything, everything is equally good and Divine. But the idea of gradation of values safeguards transcendence as well as immanence. Each new or emergent value transcends all those that are below it in the scale, while yet every grade in reality attains its own perfection only in so far as it is possessed or indwelt by that which is above it. The transcendental God progressively reveals Himself or becomes immanent in the ascending levels of reality—say matter, life, mind, spirit—the process reaching its culmination in Christ of whom it is said that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). In Jesus Christ are to be found the whole content of the divine character. All the spiritual values of the transcendental God are immanent in Him.

We must now handle the Christological problem "at close quarters." We have to attempt a systematic restatement from the point of view of modern thought as we have sought to outline it above. The present writer is deeply conscious of the magnitude of the task, and of his own lack of ability to deal worthily with so exalted and difficult a theme, especially in the space at his disposal. It is with due reserve and in reverence,

not in a spirit of confident dogmatism, that he would offer the following outline, which seeks to be critically constructive.

III

(*A*) The Foundation Principles for Restatement

1. We begin with the *Jesus of history*. During the last hundred years or so, New Testament scholars have devoted themselves with immense toil to the "quest of the historical Jesus," the attempt to get behind all the traditions and theologies *about* Jesus and to recover the authentic Jesus of history. The task is far from finished, and a unanimity has not been reached as to the facts of His life and teaching. But it is generally recognised that He is the greatest fact in history, and there is a new appreciation of the strength and beauty of His personality and of the arresting freshness, power and sincerity of His teaching. And it is here that the restatement of the doctrine of His Person must begin. The character, teaching, personal life and experience of Jesus really counted for comparatively little in the older Christology. Important as these may have been regarded for the general purposes of edification, they were treated as if largely irrelevant for the doctrine of His Person. The emphasis was not on His character and historic personality, but on the "two natures" regarded as distinct substances lurking behind His revealed and active attributes, and of which we have no direct experience. But the modern attempt is to start, not from logical abstractions inferred from the historic person, but from the *character* of Jesus as something concrete, which we can apprehend and appreciate experimentally. As we come face to face with the Jesus of the Gospels, and perceive the perfection and balance of His character, the "extraordinary combination of what are usually opposites carried into unity by their full development—obedience

in freedom, dignity in humility, strength in gentleness, mercy and severity, faithfulness to principle and sympathy, the interest of the artist in beauty and the righteousness of the prophet, the peace of the saint and the energy of the worker" [1]—the impression is left on our mind that we have here something Divine and ultimate, something which God Himself cannot excel in quality. God must be such an one as this. We must needs think of God in terms of the highest and best we know. And the highest and best we know is Jesus Christ. Thus His character and personality become to us the revelation or interpretation of God. We are convinced that the standard of values revealed in His teaching, and still more in His spiritual life, is ultimate and therefore Divine, and that in Him we come into contact with a reality than which we can think of none higher.

We note once more the difference between the modern approach to our doctrine and that of ancient orthodoxy. The ancients defined Christ in terms of God as they conceived Him speculatively; we define God in terms of Christ as we know Him historically. The older theology started from God, assumed as already known, and proceeded to say in effect, "Christ is like that." To-day, with our more empirical and historical methods, we start with the assumption that we know Jesus better than we know God apart from Jesus, and then proceed to say "God must be like that." He is to us, as to Paul, "the image of the invisible God." Appreciation of His character and human personality must fill a much larger place in the Christology of the future than it has done in that of the past.

2. We say "human" personality, for whatever else we may come to say about Jesus, a belief in His *True and full humanity* is fundamental. He had all the characteristics of a real man. He had a normal human consciousness, was subject to the ordinary laws and limitations (physiological and psychological) of human

[1] J. Morgan Jones in an article in *The Pilgrim*, April 1926, p. 266.

life, was born and died, grew in body and mind, shared in the traditional views of His age on matters of secular knowledge, attained increasing knowledge and experience by the ordinary human channels, learned obedience by the things which He suffered, was subject to real temptation yet without sin,[1] and in His religious life He perfectly manifested a human type of piety (prayer, a sense of dependence on God, filial communion with Him and submission to His will). The "docetic" view, which represented His humanity as nothing but an unsubstantial phantom or thin veil half concealing and half revealing His Deity, has no support in the Gospel and no attraction to the modern mind. In fact, docetism has always been condemned by the Church as a heresy. Yet both the theology and the piety of the Church allowed Christ's humanity to recede into the background.[2] *Formally,* His true and full humanity was always an emphatic element in the creed, at least from Chalcedon onwards; but *practically* it tended more and more to become a dead letter. We, however, accept without reserve or compromise His real and complete manhood.[3] We rejoice to think of Him, not as a mere lay figure in theology, but as our perfect Example in the moral and religious life, as verily "one of us," as the "pioneer" of those who live by faith in God (Heb. xii. 2).

[1] His sinlessness in no way detracted from His true manhood; it is rather our *sin* that make us less than man.

[2] A tendency towards docetism even on the *physiological* side is seen in some Church Fathers. To Clement of Alexandria Christ's body was exempt from physical needs. "He ate not for the sake of His bodily frame, which was held together by a holy energy" (*Strom.,* vi. 9). So Hilary of Poitiers: "When He ate and drank, it was a concession, not to His own necessities, but to our habits" (*De Trin.,* x. 24). Still more frequent is the tendency to docetism on the psychological and moral side, *i.e.,* a denial, more often implied than definitely stated, of our Lord's real growth in knowledge and grace. This tendency has lingered long in traditional theology.

[3] In the above paragraph, and in some other parts of this chapter, I have made use of my article on "The Doctrine of the Person of Christ" in the *Hibbert Journal,* April 1925, pp. 454-467. This chapter is by no means, however, a mere reproduction of that article.

3. Yet, without in the least detracting from His true and full humanity, we note that the historical Jesus was *associated in a wholly unique way with God.* Two things especially affiliate Him with God, in addition to the ethical perfection and balance of character already referred to.

(*a*) His uniquely intimate knowledge and experience of God. His "God-consciousness" was indeed (as Schleiermacher taught) the central and characteristic feature of His consciousness. It coloured His whole experience and His whole attitude to life. And His God-consciousness took the form of a most intimate personal sense of sonship in His relation to God. Not that His filial consciousness was something external, as it were, to His human consciousness, but that the characteristic form His human consciousness took was the consciousness of sonship in relation to God. Such phrases as "My Father," "the Father," "the Son," suggest a relation of innermost intimacy. "No one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). Here the word "know" means much more than mere "head knowledge"; it means that original, unmediated, first-hand acquaintance which issues from a living personal experience. It is knowledge not of information but of acquaintance. His personal religion reveals complete filial fellowship with God and perfect filial dependence on Him—absolute trust, love, loyalty—the attitude of an ideal Son to an ideal Father, combined with worshipful reverence towards One whom He recognised as the absolute "Lord of heaven and earth."

(*b*) His attitude of authority and sovereignty. From the sense of the uniqueness of His filial relation to the Father, came to Him the sense of unique function or vocation in relation to the Kingdom of God. He came

to regard Himself as uniquely called to be the agent of God's ultimate purpose concerning the world and of the final judgment of men. The form which that sense of vocation assumed was largely determined by the Messianic hope which was an inspiration and a tradition among the Jews: but the essence of it was independent of its temporal and technical form as Messiah. The idea of Messiahship will have more meaning for us if we substitute for it the sense of special *vocation* in relation to the Divine purpose. Even the more definitely apocalyptic and eschatological passages can be so interpreted. And this sense of vocation in relation to the Kingdom of God gave Him a note of unique authority. It was this note of sovereign authority that first drew men and women to Him. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old . . . but I say unto you"; "He taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes" (Matt. v. 33; vii. 29; cf. Mark ii. 27). It was, indeed, the sovereignty not of brute force but of truth and love, and so was different in kind from the armed authority of earthly potentates (Mark x. 42-45). His sovereignty is of the moral and spiritual order, which carries assent because it accords with the deepest that is in us. It is objectively authoritative because it is subjectively satisfying, *i.e.,* it answers to our profoundest needs. But it is authority none the less. And the ultimate source of all true authority is God. In speaking and acting with authority, Jesus spoke and acted "from the Divine side of reality"—if we may use Denney's phrase without implying an absolute gulf between the Divine and the human, as if He stood on the Divine side over against the human, confronting it across an infinite chasm.

4. Yet Jesus, though so clearly associated with God in His filial experience and in His sense of vocation in relation to the Kingdom, *did not identify Himself with God* in the sense of thinking of God and Himself as one and the same Being. He thought and spoke of God as

of Another. He pointed beyond Himself to the "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. xi. 25). Any view that would make them personally one would destroy the reality of the filial consciousness of Him who habitually spoke of "the Father" and "the Son" as personally distinct. It makes unreal too His religious experience, the reality of which is to us fundamental; it means that in praying to the Father He was praying to Himself, and reduces the prayer "not my will but thine, be done," to sheerest nonsense. It is true that the Fourth Gospel reports Him as saying, "I and the Father are one." But "one" is here neuter, not masculine; the oneness consists in this, that in Christ was fully embodied and revealed the absolute spiritual nature of God. In Him were manifested the Divine love and holiness and saving power. Unlike material things, qualities or spiritual values may be possessed in common by more than one person. We can think of two wills or minds as identical in content while remaining formally distinct. Different persons may possess the same knowledge and view of life, and be inspired by the same ideals and purposes, without thereby in the least losing their separate personalities or being merged in each other. And indeed such perfect concord and fellowship and co-operation between different minds is an infinitely richer and higher kind of unity than any pantheistic or monistic unity in which the many may be thought of as absorbed into the One. So we would say that Christ's filial will, though identical in content with the Father's will, is not merged in it but remains distinct as a psychological function. The relation of Subject and Object remains. God was to Christ the great Object of faith, trust, obedience and love.

5. *In the earlier theology of the primitive Christians* Jesus was the human agent and adopted Son of God, rather than Himself very God: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God"; "God hath made Him both Lord and Messiah" (Acts ii. 22, 36). But their *religious*

experience of Him as the living and exalted Christ led them to be conscious of Him as acting upon them from within the Divine sphere ("the right hand of God"). God the Creator and Ruler, the Yahveh of Jewish monotheism, tended to recede into the background, and Christ almost came to function in His place. To Paul the exalted Christ had the spiritual value of God, as Lord and Saviour. To be "in Christ" was practically equivalent to being "in God": to die was "to depart and be with Christ." He even came to have for Paul a cosmic significance. All things in heaven and earth are through Him, unto Him, in Him (Col. i. 16f.; Heb. i. 2f.; cf. John i. 1-14). Thus in Paul's religious experience there are moments when he approaches to a virtual identification of Christ with God. But the identification is never quite complete. The framework of his thought always contains two different beings or centres of reference, the Supreme God and Jesus Christ (and sometimes there is a third centre, the Holy Spirit; but this fact is irrelevant to our present purpose). In a remarkable passage in one of his earlier epistles, there is more than a suggestion that Christ's present reign as Divine vice-regent will came to an end, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24-25). Yet it appears that God the Creator and Author of Providence had for Paul become identical in action, as in character, with Jesus. The two were practically synonymous. Jesus had come to have for Christian experience "the religious value of God."

6. We have thus all through the New Testament, in some form or another, two parallel facts—the recognition of Jesus as a human, historical personality, and the religious appreciation of Him as Divine in origin and quality. And these are just the two sides which have in all ages presented themselves to Christian experience and thought. It is this that constitutes the Christological problem. It led the Church to define Christ as at once truly God and truly man and yet as one Person. And our

problem is, How can we make that real and intelligible to us to-day? Can we formulate a doctrine which will do justice alike to the human, historical Jesus, and to the place which Christian experience has always assigned to Him as acting on men "from the Divine side of reality," while yet preserving the unity of His Person?

IV

(*B*) The Resulting Doctrine

The problem has two aspects, the relation of Christ to the Eternal Godhead, and the relation of the Divine element to the human element in the Incarnate Christ. The former belongs to what is traditionally known as the Trinitarian problem; the latter is the Christological problem proper.

(*a*) Jesus Christ and the Godhead

We have first then to ask how Jesus Christ is related to the God of the monotheistic faith, whether we call Him God the Creator, or God the Father, or the Godhead, or, in philosophical language, the Absolute or the Ultimate Reality. If we accept the unbroken testimony of Christian experience that the Christ-values are the ultimate values, then how does this affect our doctrine of God and of Christ's relation to Him?

There are two obvious alternatives to choose from, neither of which has commended itself in the end to Christian thought.

1. If all the Divine values are in Christ, if we can say nothing more about God than we can say about Christ, then, it would seem, He is God in the absolute sense and there is no need of another God beside Him. This identifies Christ personally with God the Creator or the Ultimate Reality, either wholly (Sabellianism or Swedenborgianism), or with a temporal *mode* of that

Reality. This may seem to satisfy the religious interest, but it raises all sorts of speculative difficulties, *e.g.,* what became of the sustaining principle of the universe, or of the order of universal providence, during "the days of His flesh"? Moreover, this view (as we have already insisted) undermines the reality of Christ's filial consciousness, and His religious experience and sense of dependence upon Another. It seems also to reduce His humanity to a mere phantom.

2. The other superficial alternative seems to be that there are two Gods, to whom must be assigned different functions after the manner of polytheism or of Mr. Wells in *God the Invisible King.* We may distinguish them as, respectively, God the Creator and God the Redeemer. But this makes shipwreck of the fundamental assumption of monotheism, which is essential to the Christian faith and to a true philosophy of the universe as one system of reality.

3. But as a matter of fact *Christian thought has* rejected both these alternatives and sought a *via media* between them. On the one hand, they have refused to identify Father and Son after the manner of the Sabellians, and insisted on a permanent distinction between them. On the other hand, they equally refused to separate them as two Gods with Marcion in the second century, and insisted on their essential unity. The ancient Church's own mediating conception was that of two real and permanent modes of being within the one Godhead (we here omit the Holy Spirit, as irrelevant to our immediate problem). They declared the Son to be "of one substance" (*homoousion*) with the Father, but in such a way as to constitute a second "hypostasis" or mode of real existence within the one Divine "substance" or real nature (*ousia*).[1] Unfortunately

[1] "Hypostasis" is generally translated "person." But the translation is misleading to a modern reader unversed in the history of terms.

"hypostasis," so used, is an ambiguous term, the meaning of which oscillates between that of two distinct egos or centres of consciousness, *i.e.*, "persons" in the modern sense (which leads to ditheism over again) and that of two aspects or modes of the *one* personal Divine self-consciousness (Sabellianism over again). Orthodoxy made the impossible attempt to conceive a middle term conveying something *less* than the idea of two self-conscious Divine Persons and something *more* than that of two modes of being or attributes in the one Divine Person, God. But such a middle category seems a mere verbal compromise which has nothing corresponding to it, or even really analogous to it, in our experience. And since we have no experience of any such hybrid, not only our imagination but also our reason is unable to give it any real meaning. And it seems wrong to use a term of which this holds true. Explanation which cannot be thought out but satisfies largely in virtue of ambiguity has done more harm in theology than anything else. The orthodox dogma of the Trinity framed under the pressure of a particular kind of Christology before the idea of "personality" as self-conscious subject of experience had become clear is ever in a state of unstable equilibrium between the heresies of Tritheism on the one hand and of Sabellianism on the other. It seeks to combine the advantage of both without being committed to the error of either. But in fact orthodoxy more or less unconsciously gravitates, now toward the one, now toward the other, according to the exigencies of the moment. When the desire to safeguard the *unity* of God (while still retaining Christ's divinity) is uppermost, the tendency is towards Sabellianism. When the dominant interest is in the distinctive personality of Christ and in the plurality of "persons" in the Godhead, the tendency is towards di- or tri-theism. This shows the difficulty of attaching any real meaning to this mediating conception of "hypostases" as something less than "persons", in our modern sense and yet more than impersonal modes or

aspects of one person. But we cannot have it both ways.

4. To the present writer *the solution* seems to lie along the following lines. We must abandon the old attempt to define God, and Christ's relation to Him, in terms of substance or of a category so ambiguous as "hypostasis," which oscillates between distinctive or individual "substance" (possessing and included within a common one) and "person." As we have seen "substance" means little to us, as applied to spiritual beings (God, Christ, man), unless we can give it a psychical and ethical content. We find more help in the Hebrew and early Christian view of God as righteous and loving Will operating in nature and history, than in the Greek philosophical conception (which strongly influenced ecclesiastical dogma) of God as bare Being, whose nature could only be described in abstract and chiefly negative terms. We must think of God not as a static entity but as a living and dynamic Spirit in whom abides all personal and ethical values. "God is Spirit," "God is Love," God is rational moral purpose finding its culmination in the perfect commonwealth of spirits which Christ called the Kingdom of God and Paul called the Family of God. And Christ, too, must be defined in the same terms. He was one with the Father in character, in purpose, in love. It is doubtful whether the union of the Son with the Father can be expressed in higher or richer terms than in terms of harmony of mind and spirit, identity of conscious purpose, complete mutual understanding and fellowship and co-operation, community of values. This is something more significant than to say that the Son was constituted of the same "stuff" or substance as God the Father. To call this unity "merely ethical," as if that were something short of metaphysical unity, is to fail to appreciate the centrality and ultimacy of ethical values in a Christian philosophy of the universe. The ethical *is* the metaphysical in its most revealing aspect.

Moral categories are the highest we possess for the interpretation of the universe. When we assert that Christ is one with the Father in character and purpose, we have reached a point beyond which we cannot advance except by a leap into the abyss of an abstract and unknowable Absolute.

Christ's divinity, then, means that the values incarnated in His character and the quality of His will are Divine, and reveal to us the nature of Ultimate Reality in so far as it can be revealed to man. It means that "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God hath shined upon us in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6), that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. v. 19), that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father (John xiv. 9). This view safeguards the validity of Christian experience, which implies (as against Arianism) that it is God Himself and nothing less that acts upon us in and through Jesus Christ, and that the love and grace, the saving and sanctifying power that we experience in Christ have their source in the inner life and character of the Eternal God Himself.

If it be asked whether the Divine element which became incarnate in Christ was personal in the pre-incarnate period, we would reply that it was in a sense eternally personal—for it was the Spirit of the eternal personal God—but not in the sense that it was *another* or second person side by side with the Father within the one Divine Being. It was not a person in our modern sense of being a distinct centre of self-consciousness and self-determination, as the historic Christ clearly was. In any case it cannot be claimed that the pre-existence of the Logos *as a distinct Person* is an immediate datum of faith: for obviously we cannot have direct experience of the Son as existing in God before time. At best it is but a theoretic interpretation of the implications of faith, and need not be retained if it is found to create more difficulties than it solves. It seems to the present writer that the religious truth and interests for which the

doctrines of the pre-existence of Christ have in the past stood are safeguarded by the view that the Christ-values pre-existed in the one personal God. Such a view relieves us of the serious speculative difficulties which the doctrine of the *personal* pre-existence of the Logos-nature of Christ creates, while it also safeguards both the unity of God and the unity of Christ's historic person. It is enough for Christian experience that the Christ-principle (say sacrificial love) is also the God-principle, and is both the archetypal and the constitutive principles of the universe. This affirmation is indeed a bold and vast adventure of faith but it is really implied in the revelation of God in Christ.[1]

(*b*) The Divine and the Human in Christ

The relation of the Divine element in Christ to the human is the second problem. The Church is committed to the belief in the Divine-human character of His personality. But how can one and the same historical person be at once Divine and human? In being truly Divine does He not cease to be truly human, and *vice versa?* And if He is both Divine and human, how are we to understand the two elements as constituting *one* Person? This is the real crux of the Christological

[1] Needless to say, the view set forth in the text differs considerably from the popular form of the doctrine of the Trinity which pictures the Divine Persons as holding conversations with each other, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost.* It does not follow that it differs fundamentally from what was really intended by the framers of the orthodox dogma; cf. Hastings Rashdall, *Atonement in Christian Theology,* pp. 444 ff. Much has recently been said in favour of the alternative view of the Godhead as a society or fellowship of experients having real reciprocal relations. See *e.g.,* W. P. Paterson, *Rule of Faith,* pp. 219 ff., and Canon F. R. Tennant's article on the Trinity in the *Congregational Quarterly,* January 1925. This, however, seems unduly to extend human conditions to Godhead. But it must be borne in mind that it is only in modern times (beginning with Descartes) that "person" came explicitly to mean an individual centre of self-consciousness and self-determination, though this meaning was all along implicit in the Christian view of man as a spiritual being. For a suggestive attempt to restate the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of psychology and sociology, see A. E. Garvie, *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead* (1925), 473 ff.

problem. The difficulty of the traditional doctrine at this point is great. It is built on the assumption that the Divine and human "natures" are two metaphysically distinct and heterogeneous "substances"; and yet it asserts that these two incompatible entities constitute in some way a personal unity. Such an assertion of the unity of incompatibles has all the appearance of a sheer paradox, like the idea of a square circle. Christian faith is thus reduced to a *credo quia absurdum.*

What we have to consider, then, is whether God and man are respectively of such a nature that they can unite in one historical Person. Is there an essential difference in kind (and not merely in degree) between God and man? Is the difference such as to make a union between them inconceivable, except by an act of sheer irrational omnipotence, making the impossible possible and actual? It is fundamental to Hebrew and New Testament thought that man is made in the image of God. There is an essential affinity between God and man, in the sense at least that God is the ground and home of the highest human values. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect"; "Be ye holy, for I am holy"; "God is Love"; "God is Spirit"; "Now are we the sons of God." It would thus seem that the essential qualities of true manhood are also essential qualities of godhood. If so, there is no antecedent impossibility about the union of God and man.

1. *The difference between God and man.*

It must, however, be admitted that this sense of affinity and intimate relationship between man and God is ever balanced in religious experience by the sense of something in God which is unique and incommunicable. While in one sense He is akin to man, in another sense He is *sui generis,* as Creator and Sustainer of the world, the ultimate source of all being, the fountain of all resource and power and value. "I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God" (Isa. xliv. 6). If

we ignore this we involve ourselves in too anthropomorphic a view of God as a kind of magnified man, man raised to the *n*th power, "the first among his equals," "only one of the eaches in a distributive world," as William James put it (cf. the poet Blake, "Thou art a man, God is no more"). There are at least two senses in which God is unique. First, He alone is the underived, self-caused, self-existent Being. All other beings derive their being from Him. Hence God alone is the Creator in the strict sense. Second, He is the one Universal Being. He is thus more than "one of the eaches." [1] And in so far as these attributes are unique and incommunicable, *ex hypothesi* they cannot be participated in even by Jesus or by any historical person. "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John v. 19). This is the element of truth in the "kenotic theories" of the nineteenth century, which were constructed within the framework and largely by means of the categories of the old trinitarian dogma, and in such a way as to justify Ritschl's criticisms of them as "mythological." It is well then for us to recognise clearly that "God is not man"; though the tendency has been to lay too much stress on the difference between God and man, and too little on the spiritual affinity between them.

This over-stressing of difference was most characteristic of the ancient Greek philosophy and the theology of the Greek Church influenced by it. God was there

[1] He is the concrete universal, and not a mere abstract universal. This is well brought out by Canon Oliver Quick in his *Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition* (1922). This book is the ablest recent philosophical defence and restatement of the two-natures theory. But on this theory see also Gore, *Belief in Christ* (1922), and especially his *Holy Spirit and the Church* (1924), pp. 228-243, where we have a vigorous defence of the "philosophy of substance" and of the doctrine of the two natures, including even "two wills or consciousnesses" in Christ. Many modern writers reject the two-natures doctrine, *e.g.*, H. R. Mackintosh in his important work *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (1912), pp. 293-299. The present writer feels bound to reject it, at least in anything like its traditional form.

conceived of in terms of static immutability, as a timeless Reality, incapable not only of suffering, but even of sympathy, while man was essentially a creature of mortality, change and decay. This really goes back to the gulf between the universal and the particular which was a feature of the Platonic philosophy. The result was that the orthodox Christology oscillated between two tendencies, both of which it condemned in terms as heretical. (i) The most natural result of the emphasis on the difference between God and man was to reduce the unity of Christ's Person to a mere juxtaposition of two natures, in such a way that neither could share in the inner life or experiences of the other. In particular, His Divine nature could not experience suffering or limitations of knowledge without contradicting its own first principle (immutability, impassibility). Thus we have two types of experience such as cannot mingle, existing side by side in the same person. But this does not differ essentially from the Nestorian dualism of persons, condemned as heresy. (ii) The alternative seemed to be to conceive of His human nature as so absorbed by the Divine, in virtue of the "personal (hypostatic) union," as virtually to be divinised and cease to be human. This is hardly distinguishable from the heresy of Eutychianism or Monophysitism: yet it is implied in much of the teaching of some leaders of orthodoxy, like Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria. Here again the orthodox dogma was in an unstable equilibrium between two opposite heresies.

In recent times there have been fresh attempts to revive the stress on the difference between God and man, notably in Otto's *The Idea of the Holy,* where God is defined as "the wholly other." But, as Otto himself admits, Christ's gospel is "the Gospel of the Sonhood of man and the Fatherhood of God." "He who is 'in heaven' is yet 'our Father.' That heavenly Being of marvel and mystery and awe is Himself the eternal

benignant, gracious will." [1] If justice be done to this truth, which is, as Otto admits, the essential feature of Christian revelation, then God "the wholly other" becomes a friendly and kindred spirit, the Supreme Father whose essence is love.

The final question we have to ask is, Are the Divine and the human types of experience sufficiently akin to enable us to think of the same historic Person as at once Divine and human? We believe that they can be so conceived.

2. *The affinity between God and man.*

We have already referred to the *ethical* affinity between God and man. The revelation in Christ, if it means anything, means that at the heart of the universe there is a love like Christ's. "God is love," and love as a quality is essentially the same whether we think of it as Divine or human, though differing infinitely in degree of perfection and in universality of scope. The same may be said of the other ethical attributes, which are really all included in love. But what of the so-called *"metaphysical"* attributes of God, such as His infinity, eternity, omnipotence? It is chiefly in respect of such attributes as these that the Divine and the human types of experience have seemed incompatible and mutually exclusive. It really resolves itself into the metaphysical problem of the relation of Time and Eternity. We have no room to do more than suggest a point of view which may enable us to see, however dimly, how the Divine and the human types of experience may so approximate to each other that it is conceivable they may meet in one perfect historical personality.

If we define Eternity in an abstract way as pure simultaneity without succession, and Time in an equally abstract way as pure succession without simultaneity, then it would seem that they can never meet and blend

[1] R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (E. T. 1923), p. 87.

in one experience. But Eternity and Time so defined are the mere limiting conceptions of an abstract logic, to which there is nothing corresponding in real experience, Divine or human. For, *on the one hand,* the Eternity of God is not to be understood as sheer timelessness in which there is no "before" or "after"; it is not absolute simultaneity without succession. God stands indeed above the stream of time, in the sense of a mere succession of moments, and surveys it all from the inclusive point of view of Deity. But He does not stand outside it in sheerest detachment. The time-process is real even to God. He lives within it without being submerged or immersed in it. He moves with its movement, as in fact its real cause. He has time-experiences. The Christian God, at least, is not (like the Hindu Brahmă) a static Absolute, dwelling in an imperturbable eternity secure from the world's turmoil and strife; He is the living Spirit, who stands in functional relation to the flux of time and history. *On the other hand* —starting now from the human end—man, too, is no mere creature of time in the sense of living in a series of detached and transient moments without organic continuity. He is a citizen of an eternal order of reality. This is supremely true of man as a *moral* being.[1] But it is true also of consciousness or experience as such. Human experience is not a mere succession of atomic moments, each of which dies at its birth, leaving no trace behind it —mere "clock-time." Real human time is (as Bergson has so effectively taught us) "duration," which means the fusion of all the moments of the past in the living experience of the present. But we would go beyond Bergson and maintain that the living present embraces not only the past but a teleological movement towards the future. Man "looks before and after, and pines for what is not." He is no mere slave of the moment.

[1] This is what Kant meant when he taught that man as a moral being is not a mere phenomenon or thing among things, but belongs to the *noumenal* world—or as we would say, he touches the Real, the Eternal.

Consciousness at any moment is a "span" or "duration-block," which includes the assimilation of the lived past, on the one hand, and an envisaging of a purpose to be realised in the future on the other. Duration thus conceived may be called, in von Hügel's expressive language, "quasi-eternity," [1] and time is, in Plato's picturesque phrase, "the living image of Eternity." "In the compresence which is thus an essential feature of our consciousness of time we already realise, though doubtless on an infinitesimal scale, the nature of an eternal consciousness." [2] The eternal view of a time-process is not the view of all its stages simultaneously, but the view of them as elements or members of a completed purpose. God's span of consciousness is all-inclusive; ours is very limited. But the principle in both cases is the same. In a word, to put it rather crudely, there is an element of time in God's eternal life and an element of eternity in man's temporal life. Thus we are not justified in saying (if we may change one or two words in Kipling's familiar lines) :—

> God is God, and man is man,
> And never the twain shall meet.

The same line of thought will hold good of the contrasted ideas of the Infinite and the finite. "Finitum est capax infiniti" was an axiom of the early Lutheran theologians. If man is, as Bosanquet taught, the "finite-infinite" being, a finite personality containing elements which act only in virtue of their capacity for or tendency towards an infinite content, may we not call God, as related to the universe, "the Infinite-finite," or the Infinite ever seeking to pour itself into the finite? May we not think of the infinite and the finite, or God and man, as ever moving, as it were, towards mutual interpenetration, and of Jesus Christ as the point at which they fully attain it?

[1] V. von Hügel, *Eternal Life* (1912), p. 109.

[2] A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *op. cit.*, p. 354; see the whole Chapter (XVIII). See also James Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 468 ff.

In His Person and life stands revealed the Eternal Life of God in the temporal world, the Infinite in the finite, God in man.

3. *The Incarnation in this light.*

The Incarnation so conceived is the culmination of a double movement—the movement of God towards man (the initiative of Divine grace) and the movement of man towards God (man's receptiveness of God, delayed and interfered with, however, by man's sin). Inasmuch as God is essentially love, and love is in its very nature both self-giving and a craving for the possession of the object loved, God has the capacity and the desire to communicate Himself to man and to win man unto Himself. But man, too, has an innate craving for God and capacity for God ("As the hart panteth," etc., Ps. xlii. 1 f.; cf. Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in Thee"). The Incarnation is the full realisation of the purpose of these two personal movements, the meeting of God and man in fullest fellowship, co-operation and union.

This does not mean that the process was complete, even in Christ, from the day of His birth. The coalescence of the Divine and the human in Him was not a momentary act, but a continuous and progressive activity. It was not as complete or full, say, in the Child of three years as in the Prophet of Nazareth and the Sufferer of Calvary, though at each stage it was perfect relatively to that stage. The union of the Divine and human in Him "is not to be regarded as a rigid and motionless whole, but as a whole in process of realisation, a whole which is perfected in ever higher form." [1] This gives us a conception of the Incarnation as a growing, dynamic

[1] See Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. III (E. T., 1890), pp. 328-339. Dorner's doctrine of "progressive incarnation" in Christ deserves more attention than it has had. Cf. above, Chapter VII, pp. 176-7.

thing, the progressive assimilation of God by Christ, a voluntary, ethical process, a spiritual achievement rather than as something mechanical, static, complete from the first. It signifies the ever-increasing appropriation by the man Jesus of the contents of the Divine Life, which is actively and graciously self-communicative. It leaves room for a real growth in His human personality, conditioning His growing receptiveness of God. This process reached its highest achievement at the very moment of His apparent failure and defeat, which was the moment of His completest self-giving, His sacrifice on the Cross. His sufferings were both human and Divine. They were certainly not *merely* human over against the Divine "impassibility." They were the sufferings of God as man. They reveal to us that "the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind." For God is love, and love is capacity for redemptive suffering. Incapacity to suffer for others is not a sign of large-mindedness or Divinity, but of little-mindedness and callous selfishness. Christ's sufferings are the highest manifestation of the nature of God in its essential reality.

We have just spoken of the union of the Divine and human in Christ as a "spiritual achievement." This by no means rules out, rather it implies, the presence in Him of a unique, native endowment as a Divine potentiality. Recent psychology has taught us to recognise the vast field of the subconscious or unconscious life as an integral and highly important part of personality. Whilst we refuse to regard the subconscious mind and the region of inherited instincts as a dungeon of slime and filth, as some of the "new psychology" seems to suggest, we gladly accept the fact of this unconscious terrain of personality. (We have here in mind those parts of the "unconscious" which we *inherit,* rather than those *acquired* elements in it which have first passed through consciousness and have then been relegated to the unconscious regions.) It represents the element of givenness in human life. From

the religious point of view it may be regarded as the preparatory activity of God in human personality on all levels of human nature, both physical and spiritual, before His activity is recognised by the person himself. It represents the Divine initiative, the act of grace by which God freely gives man an endowment of instincts and capacities as the raw material of his personality and character. There are certain things which we feel are in us but not of us. They come we know not whence. They are not achieved by us: they are the "given," the data of our life. But as our conscious and deliberate will reacts on them, appropriates them, moulds them to its own purpose, they become "ourselves," or organic parts of ourselves. It is thus that we are to understand the initial advantage of genius; and, along similar lines, we may reverently seek also to understand Christ's special Divine endowment, a special endowment which has to be admitted in view of what He was and did. Yet, though God's active participation in human life in general, and in the life of Christ in particular, seems to start in the subconscious region, *full union* with God can only take place within consciousness. The "given" must be voluntarily appropriated and assimilated by the conscious will before it becomes ourselves. And in this sense Christ's Divine Sonship was an achievement of His moral personality, a voluntary opening up of His life to God, so that His life contained as much of the fulness of God as was possible at every stage of His history. It was the moral identification of His will with the will of the Father, as expressed in the prayer, "Not my will, but thine, be done." [1]

Along these lines, we suggest, the dualism of the Divine and human "natures" in Christ can be transcended.

[1] In the above paragraph we have made use of the late Dr. Sanday's well-known theory that "the subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or *locus* of the Deity in the Incarnate Son." See his *Christologies Ancient and Modern* (1910). We differ, however, from Sanday in so far as his theory seems to suggest that the subconsciousness is in some way superior to or more Divine than the consciousness itself.

We do not conceive of the unity of Christ's Person as consisting of an Infinite plus a finite, or a complete God and a complete man as separate entities bound together by some inconceivable nexus. It was no mere juxtaposition of two disparate "natures"—that of God, personal but immutable, and that of manhood, impersonal yet subject to temptation, suffering and death. No psycho-analysis can separate the Divine and the human in Him. They are in no sense different compartments of His Being. He was human through and through, and He was Divine through and through. He was most Divine when most human, in the ideal sense. His human will, human purposes, human thoughts, human affections, were Divine in quality. The Divine purity, goodness, love, constituted, so to speak, the innermost core of His truly human life. The present writer certainly cannot accept the view that our Lord had in the days of His flesh "two wills, two consciousnesses" (unless in the sense that all men have). That view seems to him wholly unintelligible and unpsychological, and quite incongruous with the unity of the Person. He frankly prefers the so-called "monothelite" formula, "one Divine-human energy," [1] but with a change of emphasis. He ventures to think that it is this idea of a Divine-human will that is most likely to commend itself to modern thought. Or if a distinction between the Divine and the human in Christ is to be drawn, we would suggest some such formula as this: "The form of His consciousness is human, its content is Divine." "He is the perfect expression of the Divine in terms of human life. The whole content of His being—His thought, feeling and purpose—is also that of God. Thus, in the language of logicians, formally (as pure subjects) God and Christ are distinct; materially (that is, in the content of the two consciousnesses) God and Christ are One and the Same. The human affections

[1] Thus Dr. H. R. Mackintosh (*op. cit.*, p. 488) echoes Dr. Sanday's view that "there is no possible or desirable division between what is human in Him and what is Divine."

of Christ are God's Affections; His suffering is God's; His love is God's; His glory is God's." [1]

Does this view we have put forth seem to reduce the uniqueness of Christ to a mere difference of degree between Him and others who have attained lofty heights of spiritual experience and fellowship with God? We can only reply that a difference of degree may be so great as to amount to a difference of kind, as seems to be the case between the higher animals and man. In any case the question seems a rather formal one, as is shown by the difficulty of answering the familiar conundrum: "Is the difference between differences of kind and differences of degree a difference of kind or a difference of degree?" [2] And it must be added that, according to the testimony of the New Testament and of Christian experience generally, the type of life found perfectly in Him is of the same quality as that which He communicates to the members of the spiritual community which He founded—"that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29; cf. Heb. ii. 17). Yet is His Divine Sonship unique in that His is the original and creative Sonship, while the sonship of all others is derived from Him and mediated through Him (cf. Matt. xi. 27; John i. 12). Moreover, we believe that the revelation of God in Christ is unique, in the sense that in Him the diffused rays of Divine self-revelation were gathered into an intense and luminous focus in an historical Person, and that the fulness of the Divine righteousness and love were embodied in Him in such a way that men beheld in Him a "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

And because the Divine love and purpose are perfectly incarnated in Him, therefore has this lowly Son of Man proved able to give men rest unto their souls. But what

[1] Wm. Temple in *Foundations* (1913), pp. 248 f. On the whole we prefer this earlier treatment by Dr. Temple to the one in his *Christus Veritas* (1924), Chap. VIII, where his treatment of the doctrine of the "two wills" and the "impersonal humanity" of Christ is unconvincing. See above, Chap. VII, p. 181-2.

[2] Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 147n.

can give rest to the mind and heart of man save God alone? Yet Christ gives such rest, because in Him men find God. In Him they find something ultimate, something which satisfies their deepest and most essential cravings and aspirations. So He alone can fitly say to the heart of humanity, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, save through me."

Men's sense of the uniqueness of Christ was thus expressed by Charles Lamb, in conversation with certain literary friends: "If Shakespeare was to come into the room, we should all rise to greet him; but if that Person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment." [1]

[1] Recorded in Hazlitt's Essay "On persons one would wish to have seen."

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST IN PRESENT EXPERIENCE

Frank Bryan

SYNOPSIS

I. The Elements in Christian Experience.

(1) *Knowledge of Jesus.* Love the key-note of the life and gospel of Jesus. Faith in Christ meaningless unless it involve faith in the kind of life He lived, *i.e.,* faith in love. The kind of insight that comes.

(2) *Obedience to Jesus as Lord.* Christian experience comes not to those who live apart from life, but to those who live in the world and recognise Jesus as Lord there. The psychological importance of accepting ourselves and our lot. Most dangerous to resent and difficult to accept are Suffering and Injury.

Obedience implies confronting life in the spirit of Jesus' love. The function of the will in the saving experience. Psychological needs met by surrender to Christ. The need for one unifying motive and the need for the harmonious functioning of our being: illustrations from the instincts of pugnacity and sex.

(3) *Communion with Christ;* the most vital and constant element in Christian experience. Mystical experience not universally related to Christ. The Christian identifies the friend behind phenomena with Him. The rapture of the first revelation and the manner of the subsequent manifestations.

Communion experienced through prayer, worship and fellowship.

II. The Development of Christian Experience.

This is proportionate to faith.

(1) *Characteristic Stages:* though no stereotyped development.

(*a*) *A Stage of Encouragement and Conviction of Good.* Jesus is accepted as the Lord of all good life. Faith is the heart to make a venture of trust and love.

(*b*) *A Stage of Disillusionment and Conviction of Evil.* The sense of guilt and the sense of need. The strengthening of faith through stern struggle, and the birth of a new quality in faith.

(*c*) *A Stage of Repentance and Reconciliation.* Penitence and confession: a change of mind and will as well as of heart. The reconciliation effected through Christ crucified. The victory of faith.

(2) *The Recurrence of these Stages and the Goal toward which they end.* The way to the higher levels of the Christian life. The parallel growth in insight and holiness. The metaphors of birth and growth.

Faith matures in fellowship, and sanctification in a society. The Communion Service as the climax of corporate life and worship.

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST IN PRESENT EXPERIENCE

The modern world needs a fresh interpretation of Christ, but still more a recovery of the distinctively Christian experience. To say that the world will not be saved by a theory of Christ is not to disparage the function of theology, but simply to indicate that theory is not the primary and basic thing. If a theory is to be of any worth it must spring from a living experience. If a fresh interpretation is to be a valid one, it must interpret the real Christ, who is not only the supreme figure in history, but also the one through whom saving experiences have come to men. Hence, along with any attempt to reinterpret Christ in terms of the psychology and philosophy of our times, there is need to inquire where we stand in the matter of Christian experience; what it is, and how it develops. And to these two questions we shall devote this chapter.

I

The Elements in Christian Experience

1. *Knowledge of Jesus.*

Christian experience has frequently been interpreted almost entirely in terms of emotion. People with very little real knowledge of Jesus—the things He stood for, His outlook, His ideas, His values, His purpose—have been appealed to with varying degrees of emotional intensity to "Come to Jesus"; and when, under stress of that emotion, they have made some response, their response has

been taken as evidence of a real Christian experience. And there is no doubt that in many cases it has been real, as far as it went, but often it did not go very far, for the simple reason that there was little in it beside emotion. The significance of the soul's surrender to Jesus, and the depth and reality of its subsequent religious experience, will clearly depend very largely on the content of the word "Jesus" to the mind, upon what words of Jesus linger in the memory, and how they are understood; how far the dominant ideas of Jesus serve as a touchstone for conscience; whether anything of the beauty and grace of His spirit has been discerned and captured. Though emotion has its part to play, and indeed all vital ideas and mental pictures of so vivid a personality as Jesus will inevitably be accompanied by a strong emotional tone, yet it is not on the emotions alone that the experience depends. It depends much more on the sensitiveness of the spirit to the truth about Jesus, and the measure and sincerity of the understanding of Him. Christ is not properly experienced unless He is properly understood. No one would question, of course, the validity of an experience of conversion, in which the mind of the convert, while dull and confused, nevertheless associated Jesus with all that to him was highest and best, and made the great surrender under the moving influence of the matchless story of the Cross; nor would one want to suggest that a deep Christian experience is dependent on a clever brain, for things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. But real knowledge of Jesus, knowledge to which head, heart and hand all contribute, is a necessary element in any true experience.

The weakness of what is called "the old-fashioned Gospel" is that it lacked important elements contained in the Gospel that Jesus preached, and even included some that were incompatible with it. It had little to say about the Kingdom of God, whereas Jesus said little about anything else. Its main theme was a theory about the death of Jesus rather than the Jesus who lived and died.

It implied that Christ was sent by the Father "to enable Him to forgive," rather than "because He forgives." The emphasis concerning salvation was more on security for the life to come, than on living in right relations with God and man here and now, which is the only way to be saved in this world or the next. What is called to-day, sometimes disparagingly, "the Social Gospel" is an attempt to present the Gospel that Jesus preached, a Gospel inevitably social, since it is rooted and grounded in love. This Gospel teaches, as Jesus taught, that it is impossible to love God without loving man; impossible to be forgiven without forgiving; impossible to be saved without sharing Christ's passion to save. It is not difficult to see the emphasis of His Gospel. "Whosoever would be saved" must be saved not by adhering to an organisation or assenting to a creed; but by a love that ministers to the need of suffering humanity by the wayside, that regards riches as a stewardship for love's sake, that transmutes gold through its sacred alchemy into friendship, and that thinks the little courtesies and kindnesses worth while, even to the cup of cold water and the washing of the feet—a love that recognises no limits and capitulates to no enemy. A life of faith in Christ means nothing unless it means faith in the kind of life He lived; faith that the right way to live is to love always and utterly, whatever the response and whatever the cost. Our religious experience is not real unless it is based on a vital understanding of the real Jesus. If Jesus is in large degree a theological abstraction, or if the image of Jesus stamped upon the mind has not the quality of truth, to that degree is our religion divorced from reality and lacking in saving power.

It has been shown in an earlier chapter that man's missing the way is due in no small measure to his false views of life, to the false gods he worships, and the vain satisfactions he seeks. His political and economic difficulties, for example, are due less to inexorable natural laws, in the toils of which he is caught, than they are to wrong values,

dull spiritual vision, and base desires. The law of supply and demand is far more adjustable and far less a source of difficulty than the implacable hostility or the inveterate suspicion with which an economic problem is frequently complicated. The actual trip of employer and employed is less a source of friction than the wrong human adjustment, the "lording it" over one another.

To take another instance, one of the outstanding problems of modern life, possibly the crucial one for the coming generation, is the race problem. It is a problem which in its dimensions and complexity is essentially modern; no age has had to face anything quite like it before. The closer knitting of the world into an organic unity, an increasing population, the spread of scientific knowledge and of democratic ideas among backward races, are a few of the elements that have given rise to it. But though they make it difficult enough, yet in themselves they do not make it insoluble or menacing. What makes the situation menacing is that intertwined with these there are other factors that are more stubborn. There is, for example, a false pride of race, which peeps out in cartoons and national songs, and enables us, as Clutton Brock has pointed out, to pool our self-esteem and give vent to our egotism without incurring the odium that attaches to boasting of oneself. There is no need to labour its menace or its close connection with war. We have had too recently a colossal illustration. It needs to be pointed out, however, that it is in moral and spiritual factors, such as these, far more than in economic and political factors, that menace lies. They are stubborn just because they draw their vitality from deeply planted human instincts. They are menacing because they are directed by false views of life, and are unco-ordinated with the higher spiritual world of inescapable reality which Jesus pre-eminently revealed.

Now though the economic, social and political factors in the problems of modern life may be entirely different

from anything Jesus had to face, it is only the accidents, not the essentials of life, that have changed, for human nature remains the same, and God remains the same. The triumph that Jesus won, and that generations of Christians ever since have won through Him is essentially the triumph that men need to win to-day—a triumph over false views of life, over base desires and ignoble ends, over precisely those factors in modern life that are most sinister. The first essential for us, therefore, is obviously a right understanding of Jesus. We must "see life steadily and see it whole," in the light of His dominant conception of God and the relations between men implied thereby.

It is when we face the different situations of modern life in this light that we are more clearly able to analyse out the factors that are leading men astray. We see standing out in sharper relief that false pride of race, for example, which is so menacing a factor in the international situation. It is borne in upon us that Christ's love knew no distinction of race or class, that He maintained for Himself and His people no superior status, and defended no privilege, save the status of a great vocation and the privilege of serving. We see how He refused to become an accomplice in His people's hostility to the Samaritans, passing freely through their country, expressing no resentment at their inhospitality, and even venturing to hold up to a critical audience the example of a "good Samaritan." We see how everywhere His love overleaps conventional bounds; barriers of sect and sex, of rank and race, go down before it; and we see clearly, as St. Paul did, that in Christ "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him."

This kind of insight into the love that is always long-suffering and always kind is part of the Christian experience. It is an insight that comes not from academic study, but from imaginative sympathy. No one can really know the love of Jesus who does not at the same time in some

measure, love Him and obey Him. "He that doeth the will shall know." Each fresh act of faith and obedience leads to deeper knowledge; and such knowledge is a saving experience. For Christ not only reveals the true relations of life to us, but He reveals them in such a way as to convince us that they *are* true, and to inspire us to live them out ourselves.

It is not that we can see how life lived out in that way will work, though ultimately we believe it must work, because we believe in God. But we take that way because Christ took it, and because the love of Christ constrains us, because we see and feel that it is the way we ought to take, that His relations to people are the right relations, which give us ultimately the meaning and the mastery of life. In a word, to know Jesus and to know rightly how to live are one and the same thing.

2. *Obedience to Jesus as Lord.*

It is commonly supposed that Christian experience is something primarily concerned with such things as Sundays, prayer-meetings and Communions. Without disparaging these, there is need to emphasise that it is more concerned with right living. Christian experience is that experience of life which comes through the acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus, and the endeavour to walk in the ways that He has set before us. This has always been realised in the most creative eras of the Church's history. It was a conspicuous element in the teaching of such virile Christians as Martin Luther, who poured scorn on "those who stick in monasteries," and think to gain Christian experience by contemplation remote from the life of the world. "They know just as much of a contemplative life as a goose knows of the psalter." Herrmann is right when he says "Christian piety can only arise in the field of men's moral experience." The quiet but inescapable demand of Jesus was invariably "Follow me." It is in following, obeying, "doing the will,"

living the life, that men find salvation; and not simply in contemplation and prayer.

If the claims that the Church has made for Jesus are valid, then surrender to Jesus means first and foremost submission to the reality of things. It means a willingness to accept what one sees to be the truth about oneself and one's circumstances, about life and God.

For Jesus, the world was the Father's world, its laws tokens of His constancy, its bounty evidence of His care. All the events of life came to Him from the Father's hand. He accepted life as it met Him as the Father's will. That is not to say, of course, that He acquiesced in evil; for without theorising as to its origins, He recognised it as there to be fought and mastered. But He accepted the fact of evil. At every point of His being He was keyed to reality. So, too, the man who surrenders to Him to-day must accept the stark reality of life as it is. He must not be an optimist who sees only the bright side of things, nor a pessimist who sees only the dark. He must be a "son of fact" who sees and accepts the truth of things; and most of all the truth of life's deep meanings as He finds them in Jesus, taking all experience, rough and smooth, as coming from the Father's hand. Even in its most alarming aspects he will not treat life as an enemy to be resisted. For he wins from Christ an inner assurance that there is a "friend behind phenomena" and a purpose of good behind the world's travail. He is assured that he will not be tried beyond what he is able, and that no experience can come which cannot somehow be turned to spiritual profit. So he learns "to welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough," and with St. James "count it joy when he falls into divers trials."

It is easy to write these things, though no one would pretend it is easy to achieve them. Sometimes they are only achieved at the cost of a travail of soul like Jacob's

at Jabbok, with strong crying and tears like Jesus in Gethsemane. But this way of submission is nevertheless the way to the life that is life indeed.

One of the outstanding marks of a genuine Christian experience has invariably been a certain deep serenity of spirit, that speaks of a life too securely held by a hidden anchor for the tempest of time to dislodge. Even a tumultuous and often exasperated soul like Luther's had its anchor—"a safe stronghold our God is still"; and men like William Carey have displayed in face of a succession of disasters a serenity which is a perennial wonder.

> Then marked I how a chain sustained her form,
> A chain of living links not made nor riven;
> It stretched sheer up through lightning, wind and storm,
> And anchored fast in heaven.

This serenity is a fruit of the surrendered life. There is no other way. We have to lose our life if we would find it, as Jesus said. It is only when we cease to rebel, cease to assert ourselves defiantly against the nature of things, but open our hearts to life as it is, that it becomes possible to find God, whom to know is life indeed. To rebel against life is ultimately to rebel against God; and there is no peace that way. It is to the poor in spirit that the kingdom of heaven is given, and the meek that inherit the earth.

We have first of all to accept ourselves. Psychologically this is very important. We have seen how men suffer to-day from arrested and perverted development due largely to false views of themselves. Not only are we not the people we ought to be, but we mostly do not know the manner of people we really are, nor, if we do, are we ready to accept the truth about ourselves. And so long as our minds are dominated by a false view of self, so long will there be miserable inward conflicts and frustrations, we shall chafe and rebel against the reality that keeps breaking in on us and shattering our fond

illusions, we shall be continually wounded in our self-esteem, and tempted to act like foolish children who refuse to play when the game goes against them. The first thing to be done is "to come to ourselves" like the prodigal, even if it is a pitiful self to which we come. We must acknowledge what kind of people we really are, before God can help us to become the kind of people He wants us to be.

But, not only have we to accept ourselves, we have also to accept our environment, and there are things in every man's lot, such as pain and injury, which it is hard to accept, and about which something more needs to be said.

Now, in nothing is Christianity more unique than in its attitude towards suffering. It has never supplied a completely satisfactory explanation of why suffering must be, but it has at the heart of its Gospel, "a good man, crowned with thorns, nailed to a cross, with a spear-wound in his side." The profoundest Christian experience has always come through "the fellowship of his sufferings," and probably the most helpful thing that can be said about suffering is that He accepted it.

We can see dimly that in a world set for the forging of character rather than the administration of an abstract justice, a world of law, a world in which we are members one of another, in which there is growth and progress and freedom, there must be suffering. It is inseparable from creative activity of the highest order, it is the cutting edge of the tool that shapes personality. We cannot explain it, but we can see that it is so. Even Jesus learned by the things that He suffered. As Fosdick has said: 'If we abolish the cross in the world, we make impossible the Christ in man." There is only one thing to do, and that is to accept it. To deny oneself, take up the cross and follow Him.[1]

[1] It would seem, moreover, to be true that in all pain there is a large element that is mental. So that to change one's attitude to pain is to lessen the pain actually felt. *Vide* Streeter's *Reality*, p. 241.

But perhaps the hardest and most characteristic demand of Christ is for the acceptance of personal injury. "Resist not injury, but whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also . . . love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you . . . if you forgive men their trespasses, then your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you forgive not men, neither will your Father forgive you."

Not only is this attitude to be commended on the high ground advanced by Jesus, that as God treats us, so should we treat our fellows, that we may be sons of the Father and like Him; but also because, on psychological grounds, it can be shown to be true wisdom. There is nothing more calculated to give rise to those repressions which block the healthy release of psychic energy and pervert the development of personality than permanent resentment. Jesus was not only suggesting that it was a fair bargain that man should forgive his brother if he expected the greater forgiveness of God for himself, He was uttering the condition, essential in the very nature of his being, that man must fulfil before he can obtain the release and peace of God's forgiveness.

In the light of all this, when we read of the arrest in the garden, the silence in the judgment-hall, the prayer from the Cross, the truth taught becomes luminous in action. The cruellest pain, the bitterest injustice, the most awful desolation can, simply by the acceptance of them as from the hand of God, be turned to the very highest redemptive ends. This taking up the Cross is essential to a living experience of Christ. It is the very essence of our Christian obedience.

Obedience, therefore, is more than the passive acceptance of God's will, it has even more obviously its active side, which may be summed up as confronting life in the spirit of love, and with the will to love. We have it on the authority of Jesus Himself that to love God wholeheartedly and one's neighbour as oneself sums up the duty of man. Nothing is more distinctively Christian experi-

ence than that experience of life which comes to a man when he conscientiously tries to carry out this high duty. The golden rule is a call to the adventure of love. It means responding to the appeal of innumerable needs, crusading against evils that hurt one's fellows, and sharing one's good things with those who have less. It involves the crucifixion of self in so far as its desires diverge from the dictates of love. It means we cease to desire to wrest life to our own selfish ends; or to use people to further our private interests, regardless of their good.

Something should be said here on the psychology of Christian experience. It is clear that a man cannot become Christian simply by the exercise of his will, any more than he can lift himself by taking hold of his own belt. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Wesley, with their differing outlooks on Christian truth, have all borne witness to this. In the face of a headstrong desire recognised as selfish, it is simply a matter of experience that it is futile merely to resolve not to give way. The will needs to be reinforced by some fresh supply of energy that can master the desire. There is, at least, this much truth in Coué's contention that in a conflict between will and imagination (*i.e.*, the mental visualising of an end or object desired) the imagination invariably gains the day. But if the unaided will cannot frustrate a strong impulse towards a desired object, it can determine to a considerable extent what objects of desire shall hold the attention of the mind, and thus, what desires shall be stirred. Professor James has said "the essential achievement of the will is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind." Moreover, as Dr. M'Dougall shows, "the idea of his self that each man entertains plays a large part in volition," in virtue of the strength of what he calls "the self-regarding sentiment." The desires arising within this sentiment are the motive forces which come to the aid of a weaker ideal motive and enable it to triumph over some coarser, stronger desire

of our primitive nature. There would appear, therefore, to be good sound psychological as well as spiritual reasons for urging surrender to Christ. Let a man consistently and continuously identify himself inwardly with Christ, striving by imaginative sympathy to see and think and feel as Jesus did, and Christ will become his *alter ego*. His self-regarding sentiment will then be a Christ-regarding sentiment, and will continually reinforce the will with power to do the right and Christian thing. "Willing" by itself cannot save us; but we can will to surrender to Christ; and Christ, in virtue of the fact that He is the pattern of the true self of every man, can then do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The psychological explanation is modern and doubtless incomplete, but the experience itself is as old as Paul and as universal as Christendom.

It is one of Dr. Mott's dicta that we do not drift into Christlikeness, and this is profoundly true. Ours is an age of a rather limp tolerance, resulting in a good deal of aimlessness, and for that reason the inner lives of many people are distracted and exhausted. Aimlessness is the greatest represser of energy. There is nothing more exhausting than doing nothing in particular, as witness the noble ladies served by the Admirable Crichton. But here again, Jesus meets our need. He challenges us with the fact of Himself. "Whom say ye that I am?" He asks. And if we listen to Him at all, we can hardly help making up our minds about Him. Now our great mental need is literally "to make up" the mind, to focus it on one centre, to give it one master, one dominating aim. And this need is never more completely satisfied than through the act of surrender to Christ; a surrender which brings both perfect freedom and perfect peace, because it fixes the mind to its predestined centre and leads to the functioning of the whole being as God intended.

And so we are brought to another psychological need that surrender to Jesus satisfies. The need for inward harmony. This could never be met by giving free rein

to the unregulated instincts, nor by attempting to repress them. The former method makes a Bedlam of the orchestra of personality, the latter is an attempt to silence offending instruments by stopping them up. The right method is to tune them to a common key, to bring them under the control of a competent conductor. This process is sometimes spoken of as sublimation. "Tuning in" to Christ is the most satisfying and effective form of sublimation mankind has yet found. In the course of life instincts do develop, and psychic energy flows into other channels than the original and primitive ones.[1] As the object of interest in changed under the influence of Christ, it is possible to redirect the energy of any instinct along a higher and healthier channel. Very often the inward conflict between two unco-ordinated instincts can only be resolved in this way. The instinct of pugnacity, for example, which is often in conflict with the social instincts, can be brought into harmony by arming it with, not carnal weapons, but the weapons of the spirit. There is no lack of evidence in the Gospels of the strength of this instinct in Jesus, nor does any life better display the true sublimation of it. He armed Himself with the armour of God, the weapons of faith, love, righteousness and truth. He stood as the champion of the outcast and the oppressed. And under His Lordship men have always found a like outlet for their zest for conflict—in the service of humanity.

For many people probably the most obstreperous instinct to bring into subjection to Christ is the sex instinct. It is God's delegated creative power to man. It is pre-eminently the instinct to life, and not only is it responsible for the propagation of the human race, but in greater or less degree it supplies the psychic urge that issues in the glories of painting, poetry and music. It is closely allied with the parental instinct, and is probably a factor in the awakening of religious emotion. These things suggest the channels along which its superfluous energy may be directed

[1] *Vide* Hadfield in *The Spirit*, pp. 99 ff.

apart from the primary outlet in marriage. All forms of creative activity, compassion for the lonely, the weak, the sick, the young, and above all, love for God, are preeminently such channels. And nowhere has a more winsome or wholly desirable creative ideal been set before men than the Kingdom of God; nowhere have men a nobler sight of the working of compassion than in the life of Jesus—a compassion that is strong and creative and not merely sentimental; nor have they elsewhere so glorious a vision of God, or one more calculated to inspire the purest and loftiest love. Again and again it has proved to be true in the experience of men that as they bring their unresolved inner discords to Christ and submit to His Lordship over them, the discords have melted into harmony; the true sublimation has been found in Him.

(*c*) *Communion with Christ.*

In the endeavour to know and obey Jesus, nothing helps more than belief in His abiding Presence in the Spirit, and the conviction that when we direct thought to Him in our heart, and call upon His name, there is a Divine response. God becomes then a personal presence, a presence of which Jesus is the "express image," and which is mediated to us "in the Spirit." This is the most vital and constant element in Christian faith and experience. We have already seen what a perpetual fount of moral energy it was in the religion of the early Church, which connected it intimately and indissolubly with the historic Jesus. And ever since, even in ages when knowledge of Jesus has been dim, and the life of the Church corrupt, there has always been a remnant of Christian enthusiasts sure of the reality of their communion with the living Christ. It would be easy to multiply illustrations from the washerwoman singing at her tub, "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus," to Thomas à Kempis crying before the Blessed Sacrament: "When Thou comest, all that is within me shall rejoice. Thou art my glory and the

exultation of my heart"; from the young believer who finds in moments of sudden temptation his greatest succour in an invisible Captain he must not fail, to Brother Lawrence, whose sense of the Presence was at last so continuous that he says, "I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world." A minister recently consulted some of his young people as to what it was in their religion that meant most to them, and in almost every case it proved to be the conviction that there is a friend at hand, available and interested, a sharer of their joys, and a very present help in trouble. And again and again comes such testimony as this from the aged and the sick: "However do people get on who live without Him?" In all our Churches can be found people whose lives ring true; who glow with the fire of the Spirit's kindling, and bear the authentic marks of the Lord Jesus, people who are Christ's living epistles. The witness of their lips is backed up by the witness of their lives. They have obviously, like the first disciples, been with Him and learned of Him. And the Christlikeness of their lives is the best evidence of the truth of their claim to be in communion with Him.

Now we have to recognise, of course, that others than Christians have mystical experiences—people of other religions and even those who profess no religion at all. Frequently these experiences are mediated through nature. There is the sense of a spiritual presence, "a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused," which is not necessarily identified with Christ. Shelley, for example, speaks of

> A presence to be felt and known,
> In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,

and identifies it with his "Adonais." Tennyson writes of his friend Arthur Hallam:

> Thy voice is on the rolling air,
> I hear thee where the waters run.

And since Wordsworth's day abundant expression has been given by English poets to similar experiences.

For the Christian, however, the hand that holds the stars, the voice that is as the sound of many waters, and the countenance that is as the sun shining in his strength are associated pre-eminently with Christ. And inevitably so, since Christ for him is the image of the invisible God, in whom all things live and move and have their being, the friend behind phenomena. To Francis Thompson, for example, everything in God's universe speaks of Christ, "Lo here! Lo there! Ah me, lo everywhere." As with John in Patmos, he cries, "that voice is round me like a bursting sea." All the language that human lovers address to each other has been addressed by the human soul to Christ. He is "the tremendous Lover" whose "very name is music to ear and heart and mind." The most passionate and beautiful of love poetry, the Hebrew "Song of Songs" has been freely drawn upon to express the depth and passion of the devotion aroused by His living presence in mystic communion. No account of Him can be adequate which fails to account for this love that He inspires. "Is there on earth a closer bond than this, that my beloved's mine and I am His?" Thus He moves us still to-day. His coming into the heart means the coming of love in its purest and noblest form. And, after all, it is waking day by day to love that makes men glad to be alive. Life without love is Hell. No one would want eternal life if it were not for the assurance of eternal love. And furthermore, no love is ultimately satisfying that is not holy, that does not bring men into right relations with one another and with God. Christ is simply the Incarnation of such love. In the fire of His love, morality glows warmly and winsomely. It is not then surprising that one of the characteristic results of His coming is a new richness and intensity and zest in life. The grass is a greener green and the sky a deeper blue. It is suddenly revealed that there are innumerable things splendidly worth doing, and innumerable

people inexpressibly worth knowing. The hour of self-surrender when the soul makes its first conscious contact with Christ is often especially an hour of surpassing wonder and joy. An hour when it seems that the heart is suddenly enlarged to embrace all the universe.

> The bolted door had broken in,
> I knew that I had done with sin.
> I knew that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the souls on earth,
> And every bird and every beast
> Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I thought all earthly creatures knelt
> From rapture of the joy I felt.—MASEFIELD.

The Christian life, of course, does not always begin on that ecstatic note, nor is it continuously maintained; but the Christian nevertheless learns to be on the lookout for such manifestations of the presence of his Lord. At any turning of life's way, he may be conscious of an enlargement of heart, a clearing of vision, or an apprehension of some new glory which causes him to pause with awe and gratitude, crying "It is the Lord." Anything that is truly good in our experience is of God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." "He has given us richly all things to enjoy." Good food and good friends, good days and good deeds, good music and good-humour; all good things are evidence of His goodness. Thomas Traherne has it: "You never enjoy the world aright till every morning you awake in heaven; and look upon the skies, the earth, and the air as celestial joys . . . till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold." In a word, until things and events become sacraments of His presence. Often this delight in the Lord and sense of His presence only returns after long spells of darkness and loneliness. Often it is only after a man has wrestled with some temptation, struggled against some great anxiety, or given himself to costly

intercession, that it comes. But many have testified that it does come.

> Leaps with a start the shock of his possession,
> Thrills me and touches, and the Lord is there.

It must be admitted, however, that there are some who believe in His presence, though they can never honestly say they are aware of it, or in any sense thrill to it. They are generally of the practical type, for whom the essence of Christianity is not so much inner communion as Christ's way of living. These seem to recognise Him much more in the joy that comes from service in His Name, the peace that accompanies suffering borne for His sake, the sense of clear guidance and the reinforcement of moral vigour that issue from sincere efforts to discover and do His will. And indeed all true communion with Christ should have these marks too, for it is by these that our mystic experiences are saved from becoming day-dreams and phantasies. Christian experience is not simply the sense of a spiritual presence which is characteristic of romantic poets and religious mystics in general: it is apprehension of God shot through and through with ideas and experiences derived ultimately, if not consciously, from Jesus. That is the real communion with Christ.

This communion is experienced most commonly through prayer and worship and fellowship. More will be said about fellowship at the end of the chapter. But emphasis should first be laid upon the need for individual prayer and contemplation. Few things are more vital to the reproduction of the characteristic Christian experience in one's own life than the discovery and maintenance of the proper balance between the active and contemplative, the external and the internal life. Though it is in and through fellowship that the deepest and richest experiences of Christ's presence come, yet the quality of the experience in fellowship will obviously depend on the quality of the contributions of each individual. One of the reasons why

prayer-meetings and discussion circles fail sometimes to bring one into the presence of Christ is that too often it would appear that people are attempting publicly things of which they know little in private. Corporate prayer can only be helpful if it is the corporate praying of those who have learned to pray in secret. Discussion can only further the quest for truth if those who speak have first considered and pondered, and have a contribution to make that has passed through the filter of their own personality. Secret prayer is the very fountain-head of all communion with Christ; the secret spring in a man's life whence the waters rise that mingling in fellowship with other streams in other lives form the broad river of Christian experience.

It would need a book rather than a paragraph to set forth adequately the nature of communion with Christ in prayer, and how it is achieved. And there are many such books. But it is perhaps worth while to emphasise the part played by veneration, a note in prayer too often lacking. This is a generation given more to criticism than to reverence. And certainly there is need of sound criticism to secure that reverence is only given where reverence is due. But too often men occupy their minds with the things to which reverence is not due; and never attain the power of losing themselves in selfless veneration of "whatsoever things are true and to be reverenced." Now communion with Christ comes through the discovery of the deep good in things on which we let our minds dwell with love and reverence. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, betrays such attachments to Nature and to humanity. Wherever he went he learnt to love the heart and soul of the country and its people, because of his capacity for seeing and reverencing the good. And still more was the amazing love of Jesus intimately related to His amazing power of seeing the good in man, and reverencing the man for that good; thereby helping it to become the dominant thing in him. So, for communion with Him, it is essential to cultivate this atti-

tude of appreciation, to train the eye to discern everywhere that which is good and worthy of reverence, and to preserve this reverence not only in outward bearing and in external relationships, but in one's innermost, most secret and intimate thought and prayer life.

II

The Development of Christian Experience

Salvation is simply a deepening experience of Christ. "This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ." Its condition, therefore, must ever be simply faith in Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." But, as Dr. Abbott has pointed out, "Believing is not a consummation or a goal, but a number of different stages by which different individuals pass towards the one Centre in whom they are to have life." It is no stereotyped process which works the same way in every case. No two experiences will be quite alike. And yet we can perhaps discern certain of these stages through which faith commonly passes to its maturity. It begins as a venture and ends in conviction; the believer sets out to apprehend Christ, and passes to the realisation that he is apprehended by Christ. A man's faith is more than a theory, a hypothesis, or even a creed; it becomes a fundamental assurance in the light and strength of which he lives; a personal trust in Jesus Christ, which a growing experience of Him confirms and deepens; a "proving of things unseen," a continual verification amid passing events and through human relationships of the reality of the eternal.

It must suffice just to note briefly *three fairly familiar stages,* not necessarily distinct or successive in time, or even all to be found in any given case.

(*a*) *A stage of encouragement and conviction of good.* It may happen, and where a child has been brought up

amid Christian influences it is perhaps the normal thing that should happen, that as he grows up God becomes identified with all that is good in his life. As he passes into the radiant and tumultuous years of adolescence, he associates God more closely with his dreams of human good and his aspirations after personal goodness. Even while showing an apparent disregard for religious observances, and a most thoroughgoing criticism of religious persons, he may yet cherish deep religious feelings, and faith will often awaken when Christ is presented to him as the Lord of all good life. Jesus confirms for him his hopes and desires, and appeals to all that is highest and noblest in his soul. Seeing Jesus, he can believe that the Kingdom of God is at hand. He is encouraged to believe that Christ has behind Him all the forces of the Universe, that "right is right, since God is God, and right the day must win." He accepts life joyfully from the hand of the God and Father of his Lord Jesus Christ. His eager heart sees the splendour and romance of love, and leaps to a gospel that God is love. Life opens out as a glorious, victorious crusade under the banner of an invincible Captain. There arise within his soul "august anticipations of a dim splendour ever on before." Faith is for him the heart to make a venture. It is the response of human love and trust to the Divine goodness and grace whose glory is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. It is both an intellectual conviction of that goodness and a self-committal to it.

(*b*) But there is another stage or another mood alternating with or successive to this, *a stage of disillusionment and conviction of evil,* when we become aware of another principle in the world and "in our own members." The Kingdom tarries, the showing of history is doubtful, science seems to know little of a law of love and the prospect of realising our ideals for ourselves and for our time fades. We are dismayed by the dimensions and ramifications of evil, the depths of cruelty and wickedness

to which men descend. We are appalled by the squalor of slum life, the inequality of opportunity, the seeming injustice of things, and the volume of intense and often unmerited suffering. We find it hard to accept life and confront all this in the spirit of love. The Sermon on the Mount is still beautiful, but how impossible to live by it! We meet cynicism and opposition, ingratitude and even persecution, and we are tempted to feel that Christianity is too idealistic, and any way too difficult for us. The complexity of the world's sin baffles us. The situations that daily confront us offer us not simple choices between right and wrong, like Adam's; they are situations sometimes that leave us with a helpless feeling that there is no right. Our faith in Christ seems a delusion. We discover our helplessness and the world's helplessness. We taste sin and death.

But a worse disillusionment awaits us, and that concerns ourselves. We are made aware not only of our own insufficiency, the insecurity of our hopes and ideals, the impossibility of solving the problems of life with our own plans; but also of the intractability of our own nature, the impotence of our own wills. We wake one day to realise, for example, that "*we* are the social problem." Again and again we are shamed and humiliated by our own personal failures and sin; "the good that I would I do not; the evil that I would not, that I practise." It appears that our failures are due more to our failings than our fate. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves." Something is wrong at the core of personality. We not only taste sin, we are convicted of sin. We feel not only our impotence, but our guilt.

Sometimes this leads to a quite acute sense of remorse. The more the situation is brooded upon the more heinous our guilt appears. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." "It was *I* did it, through my fault, my own fault, my most grievous fault." It is said to-day that the

modern man does not worry much about his sins; but the fact remains that a sense of guilt has been a fact of almost universal human experience. And this sense of guilt when it occurs, whether acknowledged or repressed, is at the root of much moral impotence, for it not only disturbs a man's inner harmony, but the very remorse itself tends to fix the mind upon the sin, and so leads to its repetition. Sometimes it has been the burden of this remorse that has driven men to Christ in the first instance. This is particularly so where there has been a career of vice, or a steady resistance to what has long and secretly been felt to be right and true. In such cases a deep sense of guilt and a profound conviction of sin may precede or accompany a sudden and dramatic conversion. But probably to-day with most normal and apparently happy young people it is more a sense of need than a sense of guilt that is first awakened. They do not want to make a mess of life. They want to play the game and to be of some use in the world. And it is only after their hearts have been won for Christ and they have embarked on the Christian life that they realise the ramifications of evil in the world outside and in themselves, and are convicted of sin. Then the need of redemption appears. Many ideas have to be revised, many desires purified, and many stubborn habits broken. And "we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves." Light and cleansing and moral power are our sorest needs.

The battle of faith begins now in real earnest. Can past sin be blotted out. Is there a fresh fount of moral energy that can be opened up within? Can Christ meet these needs? It is a stern test of faith. But in the soul that resolutely and sincerely confronts the living Christ, the conviction is born that He can. This is the faith which, as Paul puts it, is reckoned to us as righteousness; the faith which brings us into the right relationship to Christ, by which He is born in the soul; the faith which is the beginning of a new life, a life that is really living, a life that is alive in a new way to God.

(*c*) And so we pass to a third stage, *a stage of repentance and reconciliation.* The deepening of faith is marked first of all by penitence. The sincere and sorrowful acknowledgment to oneself and to God of the things seen in the light of Christ to be amiss. Nothing can help us until we have acknowledged and confessed the truth about ourselves; until we have unloaded from our minds the tale of our follies, our failures and our faults, all those things whereof reason and conscience accuse us. There is no doubt that, if we can find the right person, it is often an immense relief to pour these things into his ear. There are elements in the old religious practice of confession that are of undoubted value, and in line too with modern psychological methods; though such confession should probably be used as a spiritual medicine in times of need rather than as a regular habit of spiritual hygiene.

It needs to be emphasised, moreover, that repentance includes penitence for wrong thinking as well as wrong doing. It was one of the discoveries of the Reformers that at the back of the Greek word for repentance was the idea of a change of mind; and that it might also be rendered "think again." It is important to emphasise this element in repentance in view of the fact that ideas which attract the attention of the mind govern ultimately the formation of habit and the growth of character. This is especially where the effort of will comes in, without which repentance is insincere and unavailing, viz., in the determination to focus one's mind upon Jesus, to confront the soul continually with Him, to keep on continually rethinking Him, and to obey Him so far as His will can be discovered. If we let the mind dwell upon the sin, we keep alive the interest in it, and as long as sin interests there is no getting rid of it. It can only be vanquished by "the expulsive power of a new affection." We die to sin only as we become alive to Christ.

But while we have here the secret of deliverance from the power of sin, something more needs to be said about

the sense of guilt. It used to be held that this was an essential preliminary to a sound conversion. The evangelist believed himself to be impotent till his hearer "acknowledged his guilt." And the lack of this sense of sin in the modern world is widely deplored. But need we be so greatly concerned to assess our own blameworthiness in the tangle of life in which we are involved, before we can be saved? That is a process which tends to moral paralysis, and in cases where it becomes an obsession, to disintegration of personality.

The sense of personal unworthiness will come inevitably enough as Christ becomes better known to us—if we are really trying to grapple with life's problems as He grappled with them and desire excellence where He excelled. But self-same for the half-inch or half-mile by which we have missed our mark brings no energy of renewal. We grow not so much by reaching our accepted standards as by repudiating them. It is the realisation of some hitherto unimagined degree and energy of goodness in another, and waiting to be in us, that saves us. And this is where Christ meets our need, not by setting up to assess and admit our guilt, but by creating a situation in which a man can take over a new ideal without ever having realised the lesser one he had of old.

There are, however, some cases where the sense of guilt is too deep and too well founded to be met by considerations such as the foregoing. What is it that can lift the burden from the soul of the man who has actually ruined his own life, or worse still, the lives of others by his sin? We are face to face here with a tangle that only God can unravel. Nothing else can help but the revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ, the love to which every human soul, however soiled and scarred, is infinitely precious, the love which as Calvary revealed, is ready to endure great contradiction of sinners for the sake of redeeming them.

It was the apprehension of this love that made Mary Magdalene a pure woman, and Zacchæus an honest man,

and so enabled them to retrieve the past; and it is pre-eminently the vision of this love that stirs faith and hope in the remorseful heart to-day and persuades it to leave its past with all its guilt and shame to the everlasting mercy. Faith is something deep and strong in that heart then. There is no love like that born in the heart that has been forgiven. The consequences of sins may yet remain, but a new power has come to create a new manhood in which the memories of old wrongs will be also the memorials of the redeeming mercy. And above all the consequence in the lives of others, the evil influences which have run so far beyond the power of direct reparation, are not beyond the reach of prayer, and faith and service in Christ; for in taking the sinner to Himself Christ takes over the bankrupt business of his life, makes Himself responsible for it, and admits the man to a share in the joint responsibility to meet the damage and to pay the debt. Every forgiven life becomes an agent of the redeeming energies of Christ and is enlisted in His organised forces against the sin and evil of the world. In faith that all men and all events are in the hands of sovran love, the redeemed soul spends and is spent in the holy campaign for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom and the redemption of mankind.

But it is not only those people with a strong sense of guilt who come to repentance and reconciliation with God through the revelation of His love in Christ and the Cross. Again and again it is found that as men bring to Christ their sense of their own and the world's helplessness, the spectacle of Christ triumphing over evil alone, on the Cross brings them the relief and renewal that they need.

> 'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh that I seek
> In the Godhead! I seek it and find it.

There in Christ on the Cross we find focused all the

extremity of human weakness, pain and humiliation, all the failure and disappointment and agony that love experiences in the face of sin. There is one who is of our frail flesh, one to whom we are undeniably kin. And yet His apparent weakness turns out to be strength; His very failure, triumph; His death the liberation of His life and power. We are made conscious in ourselves that "the love of Christ constraineth us"; and in that constraint we are made one with God; reconciled to Him by the blood of the Cross. But the Cross only becomes a power thus, to those who have been shocked out of their complacency by some sharp realisation of good and evil in themselves and in the world. Most people are living in an enclave equally sheltered from faith and from scepticism by a tolerable scheme of practicable enterprise; they have never really opened their hearts and minds to life, or met its onslaught in the spirit of love, the spirit in which Christ died; and so the deeper meanings of the Cross are hidden from them; the sheer necessity of God's grace and the omnipotence of His love they never see.

No mere assent to the formula of reconciliation will suffice. We are reconciled not by believing any theory about the Cross, but by becoming one in mind and heart and spirit with Him who hung thereon; by discerning the nature and wonder of that love commended toward us "in that *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*" We must really have shared the fellowship of His sufferings, have confronted our enemies in the spirit in which He died, before the clearer revelation comes, and the deeper reconciliation is given. But when we do reach God by such routes, through the very heart of Christ, we know Him to be real. He is a Presence and a power to us, and not merely a hypothesis or theory. Faith is now more then credence or even confidence; it has become "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." It is "the victory that overcometh the world."

2. *The recurrence of these stages and the goal towards which they tend.*

Christian experience as we have thus described it is in one sense only the beginning of the Christian life. A thing cannot have two beginnings. A birth is unique, and can never be repeated. And this is true of the new birth in the soul. It is something that happens once and for all. And yet, in another sense, the development that has been described is typical of the whole story of Christian life to the end of the chapter. It has alternating periods of vision and disillusionment, leading each time, unless there has been some serious lapse, to a further revelation of God and a fresh reconciliation with Him on a higher plane. Each new conflict is resolved by a fresh discovery of God in Christ which in turn reveals to us deeper and more complex ramifications of evil, fresh temptations to be overcome in ourselves. As we climb the mountain of life the stronger are the gales of temptation we are liable to encounter. We meet storms on the summit from which we are sheltered in the vale beneath. But through it all the soul is becoming increasingly alive to God, and is climbing to higher levels of spiritual understanding.

So faith grows to maturity through gaining clearer insight, an insight that is inseparable from personal holiness. For it is only the pure in heart who see God. In other words, the way of life we have been describing that leads to the clearer apprehension of God is the process which is known in the New Testament as sanctification. As, by faith, we let Christ increasingly have His way with us, so in corresponding degree are we transformed into His likeness. And the very fact that Jesus so constrains us to yield ourselves to Him, and so transforms our lives to His, is evidence that the true self of every man has a real affinity with Him, and that to make Jesus the idea and ideal of the self held steadily within the mind is to direct the vital creative energies of

personality along lines of foreordained and fruitful growth.

When "it pleased God to reveal His Son" in Paul, it meant that Paul's inner life was adjusted to this new focus, that the old self had, so to speak, been broken up, and was being reassociated round the new centre. His own strong metaphor cannot be surpassed. It was the "birth" of Christ within (Gal. iv. 19). When this happens the soul begins to grow, as it were, a Christian *core* to it. It is no longer growing as heretofore round some dominant selfish ambition, such as worldly success. The new vitalising ideas and ideals round which it takes shape are summed up in the one word "Christ." "For me to live is Christ." "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me." The Christian is not a man tinkered and patched, he is a new creation in Christ.

This growth cannot mature in isolation. The members of the body that draw their life from the head, are dependent also on each other. It is inconceivable that a life whose hall-mark is love can be lived out of association with others. Nor can any one man by himself, however holy, be an adequate vehicle for the manifold Spirit of Christ. There is one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling. And each one of us is granted his special grace, his special function in the life of the body. Without embarking on the controversial question as to the visible identity of the Body of Christ, it is at least clear that faith needs fellowship in which to mature, and sanctification a society.

It becomes possible in fellowship to reach deeper levels of experience. A company of kindred minds gathered in the name of Jesus, to seek His face, and to learn His will, can hardly fail to have experiences of guidance and illumination and communion. The atmosphere is such that the best that is latent in each is stimulated to find expression. The open mind and open

heart that are ready to welcome good from every quarter keep the corporate mind fluid and sensitive to the influence of the Spirit, preventing antagonisms and prejudices from crystallising. And the clearer apprehension of truth, the enlargement of heart, the accession of strength in the inner man that come from such fellowship, are themselves evidences of the promised presence of Christ, experiences of communion with Him. Writers like Dr. Rufus Jones have shown how all through history since the day of Pentecost, such fellowship has existed, even though sometimes it be found mainly in small groups outside the official Church—"a remnant"—"the seed" which held within it the promise of the harvest to come. The writers of this book can testify how that in at least one more group within the Free Churches to-day a deep and rich experience of communion with Christ has come to them through fellowship.

It is such fellowship that gives reality to the central act of Christian worship which we call *par excellence* "the Communion." It is difficult to see how such a service can be valid without discernment of the body, the body of Christ which is His Church. We might well forego many other commonly proposed tests of validity in favour of this one of fellowship. For it is the fellowship of believers, the fellowship which is the creation of the Holy Spirit, that is the sphere and atmosphere in which is realised the presence of Christ. A communion service celebrated as the climax of the corporate life and worship of such a fellowship is communion with Christ indeed, the deepest experience of communion possible to Christians this side of the grave.

Here is re-enacted the utter self-giving of Christ and here His gift of life is received. It is a corporate act by the members of the Body in unity with their Head. Moreover, in this service our communion with the living Christ looks forward to the goal of the Christian life, as well as backward to the source of it. Not only is the cup the symbol of our redemption, "This is my blood

of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28); it also anticipates the consummation of the ages, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." And still more closely are these two ideas brought together by St. Paul when he says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death, *till he come.*" Each communion which is a renewal and deepening within us of the spirit in which He died, is also our anticipation by faith of that "divine event to which the whole creation moves," "The day of Christ," when Christ shall be all and in all. And each communion is a rededication to the furtherance of this end, a reconsecration of the body to the will of the Head. The Church has not been misled through the centuries in enthroning this rite as her central act of worship. For beneath all the many forms in which it has been celebrated it has possessed unrivalled power of "showing forth the Lord's death." Not merely illustrating it, or symbolising it, or reminding people of it, but constraining them by the love set forth in it, imparting to them the Divine quality of the sacrificial life revealed by it, moving them as nothing else does to fresh self-surrender.

> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all.

CHAPTER X

CHRIST'S RIGHT TO OUR WORSHIP

H. H. Farmer

SYNOPSIS

I. The Christian Conviction about Christ and the Theory of Knowledge.

II. The Coercive Element in the Christian Conviction about Christ.

(*a*) The coercive element in all experience of the Divine is the sense of absolute or sacred value. Other theories of the sacred stated and examined. (*b*) Christ the Incarnation of absolute value. (*c*) Difficulty of Christ's distance from us in time and of the scanty records.

III. The Pragmatic Element in the Christian Conviction about Christ.

IV. Confirmation of the Christian Conviction about Christ in other Lines of Thought.

Appendix.

The Christian Faith and History.

Note.—Since this paper was first written, nearly three years ago, I have developed much of the argument sketched in it in greater detail in my book *Experience of God* (S.C.M. 5s.) to which the reader is referred.—

H. H. F.

CHAPTER X

CHRIST'S RIGHT TO OUR WORSHIP

I

The Christian Conviction about Christ and the Theory of Knowledge

The distinctively Christian conviction about Jesus Christ is that He is unique among men, unique in such a way that we are impelled, and rightly surrender to the impulse, to give Him the obedience and worship and finality for our thought which we should give to God. To affirm in some sense the divinity of Jesus is essential to the Christian message, and whatever else we may mean by divinity, we at least mean that we accord to Him an attitude of mind and spirit which is appropriate to a man's relation to God and not to his relation to anybody else. The question we are to discuss in this chapter is whether there are adequate grounds in these days for thoughtful people to take up this attitude to Jesus and, if so, what they are. The previous chapters are meant in part to be preparatory to this question, which must ever be the crucial one for the Christian faith.

Such an inquiry must begin with some fundamental and, at first sight, remote considerations. If we are asked to say why we are certain of so tremendous a truth, if it be a truth, as the divinity of Jesus Christ, then we must ask leave first to indicate why we are certain of any truth in any department of human experience whatsoever. A great deal of religious discussion, and not least discussion about the Person of Jesus Christ, is vitiated because there

has been no preliminary inquiry how and on what grounds we know anything to be real or true, because there has been no clearly thought-out theory of knowledge. To attempt anything like an adequate discussion of the theory of knowledge, which is perhaps the most difficult of all the departments of philosophy, within the limits of a single chapter would be absurd and in this book out of place, but at least enough must be said to make the grounds of our certainty about Jesus clear and intelligibly related to modern thought.

No discussion of the general grounds of certainty can be adequate which does not take into account the fact that into every conviction of truth there enter two elements, a coercive or compelling element and a pragmatic element. If one or other of these two elements is lacking the mind is restless and refuses that typical reaction which we call conviction, and which has a peculiar satisfaction of its own. We will consider these two elements in turn.

By the "coercive" [1] element is signified the fact that in any genuine apprehension of truth the percipient is conscious of being compelled to apprehend what he does apprehend by a reality which in some sense stands over against him, and is independent of his mind and the satisfaction of his desires. The fact or truth has to impress him so that he has no option but to say "that is so"; it must shine in its own light and be there in its own right. Even when judgment coincides with desire and phantasy-thinking is therefore most probable, this coercive element is never entirely lacking; for, on the one hand, the stimulus to make any judgment at all is never merely desire, but always some given external fact in relation to desire, and, on the other hand, whatever be the internal psychical determinants of the judgment

[1] The word "coercive" should not be misinterpreted. It should be taken in conjunction with the pragmatic element yet to be discussed. Truth compels the mind, convicts it, but the latter is not always, though it may be sometimes in some degree, an unwilling captive.

as analysed by the psychologist, the person judging himself makes the judgment because it has to him the hallmark of all truth, namely, coerciveness. He believes because in some sense he cannot help doing so. The word truth, in fact, has no meaning except in a world where we are not permitted to believe what we like or do what we like. Even a very crude pragmatic definition of truth as that which works, presupposes that there is a world of fact which is given once and for all and demands a working adjustment to itself.

The "pragmatic" element in conviction seems to have two different roots and to be capable, correspondingly, of two different formulations, negative and positive.

Negatively, the pragmatic element may be described as the instinctive feeling men have that falsehood is on the whole dangerous and less desirable in its consequences than truth, and that therefore no proposition, however plausible and pleasant it may be in itself, is worth very much which is not backed by honest experimental handling of the facts. This is so even in regard to facts which cut right across the well-being of life and demand acceptance in defiance of every instinct and every value, such as, for example, the fact that a friend is suffering from cancer; the normal mind knows deep down that the first step towards making such facts more tolerable is to face the truth of them.

It is doubtful, however, whether this merely negative conviction exhausts the pragmatic instincts of the normal mind. There is a far more positive element in it. If the root of the negative element above described be practical experience the root of this more positive element might be correctly described as faith, if that were not such an ambiguous term. It is, of course, a bold thing to make universal assertions about what men believe as distinct from what they may all learn from experience. None the less it seems clear that if men reflect at all about truth and about its relation to themselves, and above all, if they give themselves to any kind of search for truth, the

conviction inevitably takes possession of their minds with greater or less explicitness that truth is good for men to know. And even if they do not reflect, the same judgment declares itself in the spontaneous admiration they accord to those who manifestly love truth and accept it even when it is discomforting to themselves.

Human nature is, indeed, incurably pragmatic in its outlook, and no analysis of the grounds of certainty can be satisfactory which does not take this into account. Man cannot but believe that the Universe in which he finds himself is in its real nature a suitable stage for the fullest realisation of himself on all sides of his being, conative and emotional as well as intellectual. But, we repeat, neither can such an analysis be satisfactory if it does not take into account also the compulsive element above referred to. The mistake has often been made of emphasising one element at the expense of the other. The attack of the pragmatists upon rationalism was well founded in that it asserted that pure reason is an abstraction, and that, however logically cogent a theory might seem in itself, it inevitably loses some of that cogency directly it is felt to leave the rest of man's nature in the air with no kind of satisfaction for its needs. On the other hand, the criticism of the pragmatists by their opponents was well founded in that it pointed out that, whilst it is doubtless true that in the long run whatever is true works, such a statement can only be made into a practical criterion of truth by an illicit conversion of it into "whatever works is true." And in any case, such a criterion is apt to leave the intellect in the air and the demand for "coercion" in the apprehension of truth unsatisfied. Somehow the two sides must be combined. Man's nature is such that it can never be satisfied by any doctrine which is merely successful; the doctrine must also lay hold of him by its inherent cogency and force. On the other hand, his nature is such that it can never be entirely satisfied by a doctrine which merely lays hold of him by coercive force. Sooner or later it must reveal

its congeniality to his whole nature. Neither cogency nor satisfactoriness is by itself sufficient as a test of truth; the two together are.[1]

This analysis of the mind's movement to conviction into coercive and pragmatic elements suffers from the inevitable defect of all such analysis, namely, that it is forced to simplify and to divide unduly what is always in reality a very complex and continuous process. In actual experience our convictions are, as it were, deposited out of a stream of experience in which at any given moment the inescapable compulsions of truth and fact and the experimental ventures of "pragmatic faith" are in continual eddying interplay with one another. There are some propositions which are so coercive in themselves that we cannot even suspend judgment in regard to them. There are others which carry an enormous constraint with them, but which are apparently challenged at once by something within us, or by some other proposition carrying a similar constraining power. There are others again which carry very little constraint in themselves, but acquire a great deal after years of experience and reflection and of interplay with other truths. In all minds in some degree, in thoughtful minds in a very large degree, reflection plays a large part in this process of depositing conviction out of experience.[2]

We will now consider these two elements in relation to the Christian conviction about Jesus Christ.

II

The Coercive Element in the Christian Conviction about Christ

The rendering of worship to Jesus as to a Divine Person cannot be anything but a half-hearted pose unless there be that in Him which compels or constrains the

[1] The argument may be summed up in another way by saying that the whole urge of life implies the principle that every living creature in some sense believes itself to be harmonisable with its environment; yet the environment is given. Cf. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 222.

[2] See D. Miall Edwards' paper, p. 193.

mind into that attitude. No amount of pragmatic proof of His adequacy to human need will make up for the absence of that compulsion. But if this is to be the impression He makes upon us, we must postulate in man a capacity to identify immediately the presence of God in human life—worship being the instinctive and proper response to such an identification when it takes place. Now Christian faith, indeed all vital religion of any kind, affirms the existence of such a capacity in man. The enormous vitality of religion all down the ages is, indeed, only explicable on the ground that in religion something comes into life and strikes the apprehension of men with a coerciveness comparable in its own sphere to the way in which the scarlet of a geranium strikes the senses. Those who seek to give a purely pragmatic account of man's religious propensity, and regard it as a merely useful illusion which nature or society imposes upon man to help him in the struggle to exist, merely betray their ignorance of the facts they are trying to explain. The tremendous hold of religion upon the religious mind, its power to make successfully the most exacting demands in face of the most powerful natural instincts that run counter to those demands, its capacity to inspire men to martyrdom and to the most rigorous self-denial, cannot be explained if religion be what some assert it to be, namely, a form of merely pragmatical phantasy-thinking whereby weak creatures create for themselves the comfortable paradise of a fool. Religion never is, and never has been, merely an expedient. It is always a pungent stimulus to activity, and one of the most coercive factors in human life. At the heart of it is the peculiar sting of the real. God lays hold of the mind with the coerciveness of the truly objective. He is "a consuming fire." This capacity to apprehend immediately the presence of God in life we affirm to be at work in all vital religion, and the point we make here is, that it must also be at work in any vital apprehension of the Divine in Jesus. Certainly the facts of Christian experience go to support this contention. A

martyr hanging head downwards over a fire "for Jesus' sake" can hardly be said to be there because he finds that Jesus "works," and because such a violent end somehow unifies his experience. He is there because Jesus somehow has "laid hold on" his allegiance absolutely, by some self-evidencing, coercive quality of His own nature. The distinctive Christian attitude to Jesus cannot be reached in any living way *merely* on pragmatic grounds. Indeed, the reason why so many Christians are so unconvinced and unconvincing in their Christianity, the reason why there are not more martyrs, is that they try to maintain faith in Christ *merely* on the basis of a pragmatic test. Life seems to triumph over Christ at so many points that faith in Him on these grounds becomes a continuous effort in the end too burdensome to sustain. Christianity has survived and transformed the world, not by men laboriously sustaining faith in Jesus, but by the power of Jesus to sustain coercively man's faith in Himself.

Jesus, then, we maintain, has the power to lay hold of the human spirit coercively with a sense of being Divine.

(*a*) *The coercive element in all experience of the Divine derives from the sense of absolute value.*

In order to see that Jesus has this power, and to avoid the otherwise legitimate criticism that we are taking refuge in a mere "faculty-psychology," it is necessary to inquire what exactly is this coercive touch of the Divine in human experience, and how it is related to the constitution of the human mind.

Such an inquiry introduces us at once into the vast and infinitely debatable subjects of the philosophy of religion, the history of religions, the psychology of religious experience, upon which so much has been written in the last half-century. It is not possible to do more here than indicate a general point of view.

Our view is, in brief, that at the heart of every manifestation of religion, from the most primitive to the highest, there is in some degree a consciousness of the

presence of absolute values in human life. By the word "absolute" in this connection is meant that such values are apprehended, however dimly, as requiring of man that he seek them at all costs, even at the cost of life itself. They are so incomparable in worth that nothing else whatever must be allowed to enter into competition with them. In and through his sense, however mixed with superstition and error, that Someone or Something in life confronts him and demands, and has a right to, absolute surrender and obedience, man thrills to the touch of God. This is the supreme differentiating quality of the religious fact, and enables us to identify its presence in the midst of all the other (strictly speaking) non-religious elements, like magic, ritual, belief in demons, which historically have been closely associated with it. And it is this which all down the ages has preserved religion amidst all the developments and changes of civilisation as one of the most powerful and formative factors in human life. Man cannot escape for long the sense that there are sacred values in life, values, that is, with which he dare not trifle, and to which even life must, if necessary, be surrendered; and he cannot avoid for long using the term God in relation to these sacred values and calling their constitutive principle the Will of God. The coercive touch of the Divine on the human spirit comes through man's sense of sacred values.

In thus finding the differentia of religion in the sense of the sacred we are adopting, at least verbally, the position of most modern writers on the subject. It is astonishing that it took students so long to give proper weight to the fact that the universal and quite peculiar feature of religion is to put the category of the sacred at the centre of all its experience, thought and ritual. But unanimity on this point has very quickly broken up into differences of opinion as to what exactly the sense of the sacred is.

There is, for example, the view of Durkheim and his school, according to which the sense of the sacred is merely

the disguised pressure of society upon its members. When man apprehends the sacred he thinks he is in relationship with God, but actually he is not; the only reality he is in contact with is his society, which, in order to preserve and develop itself, adopts this disguised method of laying hold of its members. The voice of God is the voice of the people heavily disguised. The argument appears to be that a human society is inconceivable which does not impose upon its members some sort of ideal of its own organisation and of the purpose which that organisation is meant to serve. "A society can neither create or re-create itself without at the same time creating an ideal." Morals are collective sentiments indispensable to any society which is going to survive. What, then, is religion? It is the reinforcement of the individual by attaching special sanction to the social demands in order that he may the better serve social ends. In morals society holds up its exacting ideals to the individual; in religion through the sense of the sacred and through the cult of which the sacred is the centre, it gives him the necessary spiritual incentive to pursue those ideals. Durkheim is anxious to grant that by religious exercises a man's powers are quickened and his personality enhanced, but this he attributes to the man soaking himself, so to say, in social stimuli and encouragements which the idea of the sacred and the cults which surround it bring to bear upon him in an unusually concentrated form. In the last resort, however, society is the only reality involved other than the individual. God is non-existent save as a powerful symbol for society.

Many criticisms of this theory might be offered,[1] but

[1] Thus it might be pointed out that Durkheim starts his inquiry with an entirely gratuitous and question-begging assumption, namely, that the ideal is something "added to the real" (*Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, English translation, p. 421), and that the sacred is a property attributed to objects which they do not possess (*ibid.*, p. 422). There is behind this assumption a very debatable philosophical position, *but it is not debated.* Again, no matter how much Durkheim may insist that to regard a tremendous force like religion as pure illusion is absurd, that is after all very nearly what he does. For the sacred *is* the central category

one alone is sufficient, namely, that it is not adequate to the facts of the moral and religious history of mankind. If religion is merely society's way of vitalising the individual on his ethical side in order to promote its own progress and stability, then it could hardly happen that the ethical sense as played upon and developed by religion should at any one time be far in advance of the average ethical sense of contemporary society. Yet it has frequently happened that moral insight under the influence of religion has climbed to a height so transcendently beyond normal social standards that it is impossible not to suspect that religion contains in it a principle of moral growth which is quite peculiar to itself. Society's ideals and religious ideals have not, as a matter of fact, always advanced *pari passu* or even with only a small gap between them. On the contrary, the disproportion between them has sometimes been so enormous as to take all plausibility from the theory that they are both effects of the same cause. The outstanding example of this is the Hebrew prophets, culminating in Jesus Christ. It is undeniable that the ethical insight of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus was bound up in the most intimate way conceivable with their consciousness of God; and further, it is undeniable that both the ethical insight and the religious life which nourished it were so far in advance of the standards of contemporary society that they give the impression at times of working in an entirely different world. If this is granted, then according to the theory under discussion we have to suppose that a society whose average moral and religious level is (say) 10, can produce an individual whose religious and moral level is (say) 1000, entirely out of itself without any outside factor intervening at all. To take the case of Jesus, we have to suppose that an intensely nationalistic and exclusive society, as the Jews were in the time of Jesus, for its own

of religion, and if men when they deal with the sacred think they are dealing with God when in reality they are only dealing with society, what is that but illusion right in the heart of the whole business?

purposes of "construction and reconstruction" contrived to disguise and present itself to one individual within it as a Divine Father of all the children of men, and in and through that deception to impress upon that individual an ethic of love to enemies and service to mankind which was at the time and has been ever since as far beyond the current standards of morality as anything could well be; having achieved this miracle for its own purpose, we are to suppose that the society in question promptly slew the prodigy it had produced. This is, to say the least, a very mysterious proceeding, and the only way of explaining it is either to repudiate Jesus and the prophets as moral and religious freaks, or to attribute to society an unconscious insight into its own requirements and a secret capacity for achieving those requirements which it is quite impossible to analyse or trace. Both of these alternatives are really a confession of the bankruptcy of the theory, and show that to attribute both religion and morals to the working of society is merely to make one of those plausible generalisations which carries the mind over a gap by using a familiar word. If it is said that to explain the evolution of religion by referring it to the operation of a Holy Divine Spirit on the human mind is also to cover gaps with a word, the answer is a simple denial that it is so. Our quarrel with the theory under discussion is that it can point to no force or disguised process in society which is at all capable of producing the transcendent moral and religious life of Isaiah or Jesus. It leaves a gap between the known effect and the alleged cause which makes the theory as an explanation very nearly useless. But to introduce the working of God's Holy Spirit upon men's minds is to introduce a factor which, while not denying the influence of society in the evolution of religion, suggests a cause really adequate to its effect, and one which has the added merit of not turning the religious experience of mankind into illusion.

Another theory of the sacred is that advocated by Otto. According to this view man's experience of the

sacred is absolutely *sui generis,* and requires to be designated by a specially coined term, the "numinous." The numinous for Otto means a Divine Somewhat which lays hold of man's spirit in the first instance altogether apart from any apprehension of moral values. Only later in religion does the sense of the ethically sacred enter in, and that by virtue of a connection which Otto does not analyse but designates in a very question-begging way "*a priori.*" "We are forced," he said, "to assume an obscure, *a priori* knowledge of the necessity of this synthesis combining rational and non-rational" [1] (combining, that is, the numinous and the ethical elements into the full category of the sacred). But is this really any other than an admission that the cleavage between the ethically and the non-ethically sacred is not so profound as has been made to appear; that, indeed, they ought never to have been separated at all? It is difficult to see why this obscure *a priori* knowledge of the necessity of the synthesis should not have been operative from the earliest beginning of religion, and if it were so operative, that would be tantamount to saying that there never was a stage in the evolution of religion when the sense of the sacred was not essentially ethical, essentially bound up with the apprehension of value, whatever other things it may have been associated with at the same time.

This last view is the one advocated here. It is that from the very beginning and in all its manifestations man's sense of God's touch in what he calls the sacred has had a "value" content, and that this has been the central and distinctive thing in it. This does not mean that we reduce religious experience to the bare apprehension of a moral ideal of conduct. The term "value" or "ethical" in this connection we should define very widely to include the sense of beauty and of the sublime; moreover, in religious experience there is always some apprehension, however dim, of what may be called in a clumsy phrase "existential depth," that is to say, the

[1] *The Holy,* English translation, p. 140.

spirit is conscious that the call of absolute value comes from an ultimate Divine reality from which it draws its life and is sustained in being. Many different thoughts and apprehensions and desires can enter into a religious experience, and much valuable work has been done by psychologists and others in analysing them out from the infinite varieties of religious experience that exist; but our contention is that none of these thoughts and aspirations and desires are religious *apart from their association in the religious experience with the sense of ultimate value*. The latter is always the essential, though not the only constituent of a religious experience properly so-called. If the sense of a Divine Holiness requiring our conformity to itself were withdrawn, even the least analytically-minded religious person would be conscious at once that the heart of the thing had been plucked out. According to this view the history of the development of religion is very largely the history of the release of this central sense of God as absolute moral holiness, not from all other associated and implied thoughts, but from those which are merely clogging and false, and not least from those "spooky" associations which Otto calls numinous and regards as the fundamental thing in man's awareness of God.

It would take too long to set forth all the arguments which might be adduced in support of this position. In general we believe that it covers more of the facts of the history of religion and of our own religious life, and sets them in more orderly perspective with one another than any other formulation.

We may, however, mention four things.

First. The view we have propounded helps us to understand the curious fact that historically religion and sacrifice always appear in the closest connection with one another. In the highest religions the idea of sacrifice appears in the form of a demand for self-sacrifice, but in the majority it expresses itself in some sort of ritual sacrifice at an altar. The rite of sacrifice, moreover, is

always regarded as the focal point of the religious life, the consummation as well as the basis of all men's dealings with God and with sacred things.[1] If sacrifice is thus co-extensive with and central in all religion, and if the identification we have made between the coercive element in religion and the sense of absolute values be correct, then it is not difficult to see the connection between these two things. They are expressions, the one concrete and historical, the other abstract and analytical, of the same fact.

The gross superstition and cruelty which have so often been mixed up with sacrificial rites should not blind us to the presence in them of the sense of absolute value. The bloody rites of some pagan religions, such as the infant holocausts to Moloch, may have had in them something of decadence and something of merely superstitious dread. But we affirm that there is also in them, and this is what makes them really religious phenomena, a sense of Divine powers which are apprehended, dimly, yet with a certain immediacy, as having the right to demand through their essential nature the sacrifice of the dearest possessions of the heart. The emergence of a higher religion is simply the emergence of a clearer idea of what the absolute demands of the sacred Divine Will are. We can thus trace a continuous line of development from, say, a mother casting her babe to Moloch and Damien giving up all to tend the lepers. They stand in a direct line of succession with one another; they are both bowing their heads, the one primitively, fearfully, superstitiously, the other with the fuller light of knowledge which has come through Christ, to a haunting Divine presence in their hearts which reveals itself chiefly through its insistence on an absolute surrender of this life to itself.

[1] Even in those religions in which the element of sacrifice is not immediately discernible, it can usually be detected in a disguised or perverted form. The beginnings of Islam, for example, can hardly be understood apart from the call to the Holy War, and to-day Islam centres very much in and around the demand for a pilgrimage to Mecca at whatever cost.

It has often been pointed out that the red streak of sacrifice runs through all religion. But we set the matter in better perspective when we thus see that the more fundamental "streak" running through religion is the streak of sacred obligation. Sacrifice need not always be red. Even in the joyous feasting of much primitive religion the element of obligation to the Deity, the sense of an almost contractual relationship to Him, involving the rigid rendering of certain dues, was never lacking. It is the value of the line of thought we are following that it lays bare the wider connotation of the element of sacrifice so universal in the religious consciousness of man, and thus relates primitive religion directly to our own higher Christian experience, from which, at first sight, the whole complex of ideas surrounding ritual sacrifice would seem at times almost entirely to disappear.

Second. Following on from this, we have in this analysis of the religious consciousness a criterion by which to judge various religions and compare them with one another. The standpoint of these essays, needless to say, is that Christianity in essence is the crown and flower of the religious evolution of mankind. It is the final religion for mankind, and it is this because in Jesus a full revelation of the ethically sacred or, in other words, of the holy character of God and its claims upon us has been made. Such a standpoint does not involve any disparagement of the worth of other religions or any refusal to learn from them where our own apprehensions have been partial or erroneous, but it does involve a refusal to regard even the higher religions as on a level, or to allow men and women to take their choice between them, according to their own temperament and inclination. Not the least weighty indictment which can be brought against Otto's conception of the numinous is that, however much the author may insist on the pre-eminence of Christianity, it does in point of fact tend to open the door to almost any type of religious experience. In the twilight of numinous feelings differences tend to

disappear. A man who is accustomed to enjoy very profound numinous feelings will find it difficult to see why he should change his religion for one which gives him higher ethics but less of the numinous, and he will appeal to the authorities that, after all, the numinous is the essential thing in religion. But if we identify the sacred touch of God with the ethically holy, we are in a position to claim that Christianity is the last term of a religious evolution, and to ask men to advance to it from other religions, which, however beautiful and valuable, are not the highest. Ultimately, of course, each individual must decide for himself whether the claim so made for Christianity is true, but the point now is, that the claim is a perfectly reasonable one in view of what we believe to be a correct understanding of the essence of the religious life. Christ, we believe, can lay hold of men and convince them that they are in the presence of the utterly sacred, of that perfect holiness through which alone we can identify the presence of God in life. If He cannot, our whole position falls to the ground.

Third. The view we have set forth gives us a religious outlook which is expressible in terms of a sound and up-to-date philosophy, a fact which is not only very satisfactory for our own minds, but also provides a cogent apologetic in presenting our faith to the world. The reality of God and the validity of religious experience can only be supported rationally on the basis of an idealist philosophy and theory of knowledge, which regard values as being as real as electrons and vibrations. Students of modern philosophy will know how impressive a case for the reality of values has been built up. The case rests mainly on the necessity on the one hand, of getting a theory of knowledge which shall save the human mind from being condemned to everlasting and incurable subjectivity, and on the other, of doing justice to the full-orbed richness of human experience. But the step from the reality of unseen values to the reality of God as the ultimate Holy Will behind them is not a difficult one

even to the pure metaphysician. To the religious mind the step is inevitable, especially if its reading of religious history and of the facts of its own religious experience has already led it to the conclusion that God touches the human heart in a living and coercive way through its sense of absolute value. Religious experience and philosophical inquiry are thus seen to converge to the same focus.

Fourth. The line of thought we have been following gives us an adequate coercive basis for the place Jesus has always been accorded in the Christian consciousness. This brings us back to our main theme.

(*b*) *Christ the Incarnation of absolute value.*

We discern in Jesus the perfection of personal life, the altogether Holy Will, the altogether sacred. The only means we have of identifying God immediately in life is through such discernment; when we meet that altogether Holy Will, we know that we meet God. We know it intuitively, inevitably, coercively. It is sometimes urged against certain types of Christological theory that they affirm of Jesus nothing more than that He has the value of God. But is there real force in this objection? There is surely an inadequate analysis of the religious consciousness behind the criticism. God confronts us through *absolute* value. That haunting presence which man has felt right from the dimmest and most superstitious beginnings of religion, often misconceived, often clouded by ignorance and irrelevance and disobedience, yet always calling to dedication to a holier and higher way of life, shines out at length in the personal holiness of Jesus, and in His presence man knows at once that he is in the presence of the holy spiritual life of God Himself, that holy spiritual life which has been seeking him all down the ages. It is not that man has any standard of the Divine apart from Jesus, by which he can measure Jesus and adjudge Him to be Divine. It is man's immediate recognition of the fulness of Divine Holiness even though

such a vision of Divine Holiness has never come to him before. So Jesus gives us a new vision of God, but, though new, we can recognise it to be of God through that faculty of discernment which has been operative all down the ages in man's developing religious experience. It is a manifestation of God which, like all such manifestations, shines in its own light.

The position, then, is that at the basis of a living conviction of the Divinity of Jesus Christ there must be the same kind of immediate response of our personalities as that which lies at the basis of all experience of God; further that such a response is possible, and with many people actual, because God always does break in upon consciousness through the sense of the absolute value of the true, the beautiful and the good, realised in personal life. It should be pointed out that such a response is not possible if we conceive the sacred as "numinous," and this is another count in the criticism of Otto's treatment. *The latter fails to give any coercive basis for the Christian conviction about Christ.* For where is there any sign of the numinous in the impression Jesus made upon men? If He ever made such an impression, it must have been very rarely, for otherwise the attitude which the bulk of the people took up to Him and their ultimate rejection of Him are inexplicable. Such an attitude does not look like the reaction of men's minds to the "numen" as it is analysed by Otto. And in any case, it is certain that Jesus cannot make a numinous impression upon men now after the lapse of so many years, so that one of the main nerves of Christian discipleship in these days would seem to be cut.

It may be urged, however, that no less does Jesus fail to make any very pronounced impression upon men of being the realisation in a person of morally perfect spiritual life; and that therefore the basis of worship of Jesus is equally insecure, whether we define the sacred as "numinous" or in strictly ethical terms. This is a criticism which must now be faced, and the facing of it

will enable us to say something of how man's perception of the sacred is related to the constitution of his mind.

(*c*) *The difficulty of Christ's distance from us.*

It is a very real difficulty with many folk that Jesus lived so very long ago and that we can only get into touch with Him through a few exceedingly scanty and not always mutually consistent records. Is it not asking too much, they say, is it not more than a trifle unreal, to tell us to look at Jesus and feel the coercive impression of perfect holiness in Him? There is all the mistiness of distance about Him, and we have the merest outline sketch of His life. The first disciples were in a different position.

The answer to these difficulties in the first instance is to point out the very subtle but significant fallacy which is wrapped up in them. The fallacy is that their force largely depends upon the unconscious assumption that Jesus is only a very ordinary human figure after all But that is precisely the question at issue. These difficulties would certainly hold in respect of any ordinary human figure in the past, but is it certain that there is not that in Jesus which can lay hold of us and impress us, despite the lapse of two thousand years and despite the scantiness of the records? May not His power to do that be precisely part of the evidence that He does stand apart, that quite uniquely in Him God has manifested Himself to mankind?

Let us assume for the moment that what Christianity asserts about Christ is true, and that in Him there is a complete and adequate unveiling of the Divine character and purpose, in which everything has its being and from which in the end everything derives its meaning. What would follow from that?

First, it would follow that the lapse of time and the changes which that lapse has brought about are quite irrelevant to the abiding and verifiable significance of Christ. In proportion as a spiritual fact is true and

charged with the mind of God it becomes independent of time and change. Man has to deal with the same Divine purpose whether he rides on mules or in motor-cars; whether he lives in the year one or the year two thousand. If Christ were only a very partial vehicle of the truth, then the argument that the lapse of two millenniums puts Him out of date and beyond comprehension would have considerable force. But then it is precisely the Christian assertion that Jesus is not partially, but wholly, the vehicle of God's character and purpose; therefore it is illogical to urge in advance against that assertion precisely that which its truth, if it be truth, makes irrelevant, namely, the lapse of time.

Again and along the same lines, in proportion as Christ is what Christianity asserts Him to be, so in that proportion will He of necessity persist in human life as a kind of grain or pattern of it, and so will be directly observable in varying degrees by those who care to look for Him, even in these days and in the midst of this civilisation. This is not to be vaguely mystical. It seems to follow alike in logic and experience, if Christ be all that we claim for Him. The point is that it is most emphatically not a question of making a supreme effort of mind and leaping right out of twentieth-century England over two thousand years into first-century Palestine, and sitting at the feet of One who, however delightful and impressive, is really deeply alien to our nature and our life. That is the kind of idea people have in their minds when they shrug their shoulders at the suggestion of looking at Jesus and feeling the presence of God in Him. It would be a right idea if Jesus were but a historical individual with no unique significance. But Christianity says that He has a unique significance, that He carries in Him the very Divine character and purpose which are behind all history. And from this it follows, if it be true, that He is a clear and focused revelation of that of which the whole of life, as we have to meet it to-day, is a clouded and diffused one. If we are

fronting modern life with any sincerity of purpose, and if Jesus be what we claim Him to be, then we must be continually getting blurred impressions of Him one way or another, for all life ultimately expresses God's mind and purpose. To go, therefore, and observe the figure of Christ in the Gospel stories is not to attempt to build up from the beginning out of nothing that which has no prior affinity to us. All sorts of vague impressions, fleeting glimpses of the highest and best way to meet life, half-solved problems waiting for exactly the solution He indicates, joys which we could not quite understand, moral aspirations which we could not quite satisfy, will be already as it were in solution in our minds waiting to assume crystalline form on His figure. For example, no one, one may suggest, can study the problems of modern industry or the history of the rise of it, or can come into any kind of close personal contact either with the difficulties in the way of the solution of industrial troubles or with the kind of employer who has occasionally succeeded in overcoming those difficulties, without having his mind prepared, consciously or unconsciously, for the living realisation that Jesus does sum up the eternal structure and grain of life, that He is the way through. Or again, no one can think at all seriously about the problem of suffering and its relation to sin without having his mind and spirit prepared for the Cross of Christ and for an electric and irresistible revelation, which may come quite late in life, that that Cross is the revelation of the very heart of God. If Jesus be what Christianity says of Him, then we have in every modern problem something which in the end must help to annihilate rather than accentuate the intervening two thousand years.

Similarly with the difficulty of the scanty records. That, too, falls to the ground if Jesus be what Christianity claims. For if He be that, then His relationship to every human personality must be of a very peculiar kind. He must be in some sense the norm, the ideal, that completed

and balanced maturity which every human being by the essential law of his being is, amidst so many frustrations and failures, striving to achieve. Obviously there is something in every human personality which governs its growth from its first conception and determines that it shall grow into a man and not into a bird or a tiger. This hidden urge which carries the child through all the stages of childhood and fashions him into an adult man, this certain specific normality which must be given its appropriate treatment or the whole personality is thrown out of gear and is unhappy, is God's idea of what a man should be. It is hidden in the heart of every human organism and is the most important thing in it. So also at the heart of every animal organism there is the specific principle of its distinctive nature. The question then is, what is that principle for the human organism, its governing idea. If Christianity be true, it is Christ. Christ is perfectly what we are meant to be. In other words, there is at the heart of every human being, more or less frustrated and dammed back, but restlessly pressing upward all the time to a full expression and achievement, a latent Christ, a Christ within, a life after the type of the "Son of Man."

But if that be so, consider what it involves. It means that anything like a full-length portrait of Jesus is not necessary. So long as there is enough material for His personality to shine through, the deepest instinct of our nature, the whole law of our being, does the rest. Something leaps out to meet Him, seizes upon Him through the scanty records and fills up the picture from within, saying, "This is perfect spirit, this is the living completion and fulfilment of every dim vision and motion towards the highest that my soul has ever had." Spirit answers spirit, deep calls unto deep, for in both is God as Spirit.[1]

[1] Even if we accept this view that the Gospels only give us a portrait of Jesus according to Christian faith, and that any attempt to get behind that portrait of faith is foredoomed to failure, the line of argument set forth above is not invalidated. For the substantial historicity of the Gospels

If this be a valid line of thought it means that by identifying the coercive touch of God upon men's spirits with the sense of the ethically sacred we are given a permanent basis upon which to ground a living conviction about Jesus. But if we identify it with the numinous, then we have no such permanent basis, for by definition the numinous has no place in the constitution of our own nature. It is the "wholly other."

It should be noted that the position outlined above is based upon a tacit assumption, namely, that the Divine perfection is somehow the law of human nature. We are to be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect. We shall come back to this point later.

III

The Pragmatic Element in the Christian Conviction about Christ

This also, as we have seen, is essential to a full conviction of truth. It is necessary, however, to be careful in stating in what exactly it consists.

It is an element in all vital religion that God comes to us not only as coercive holiness, or Divine ideal, but also as succouring power ("my refuge and my strength"). But in what sense does He succour us? Not, obviously, by smoothing out difficulties and making things easy. Surely Ritschl is right when he says that the primary succour of God is that He guarantees to us that we are, as personalities, the vehicles of permanent values in the

being granted (as it must be), it remains true that the first Christians at least had to seize upon the inner significance of Christ's personal life in the way we have indicated. That they have told the story of Christ in the Gospels in the light of their perception of the religious significance of it does not prevent us from receiving the total impression of Christ (historical fact plus interpretation) for ourselves and endorsing the Evangelists' presentation of it. In a similar way I can never look at some of Turner's pictures except in the light of Ruskin's comments on them, yet I am quite sure that the latter are not a fictitious addition to but a truthful explication of the whole reality of the picture as it stands before me.

midst of the natural forces which surround us and in the end seem to destroy us. In other words, the primary pragmatic test of God's transactions with us is the extent to which they result in an ever-increasing poise and triumph of spirit which no challenge from the world about us can overthrow. If a man responds to the coercive touch of God loyally, and finds that so responding he receives more and more an indefinable sense of spiritual power and conquest over his world, then he has the fullest conviction possible that he is basing himself on truth, and that God is the reality which he has instinctively all through taken Him to be.

Note, however, once again, that this pragmatic test involves the same tacit assumption which we noticed above in dealing with the coercive element, namely, that the holy will of God is somehow the deepest law of our own being. In His service is our perfect freedom. Also it involves that our highest life is not ultimately opposed by the natural environment in which we live. In response to its challenges and through the succour of God we achieve ourselves and at the same time win the victory over our world.

The application of this to Christology is obvious. If, in addition to making an immediate, coercive impression of the Divine upon us, Christ can in practice produce health of soul and triumph over the world, then, granting the tacit assumption above mentioned and granting the correctness of our analysis of the ordinary bases of conviction in human experience, the affirmation of His Divinity is as soundly grounded as anything could well be.

That Jesus can and does in practice produce health of soul and triumph over the world, it has been the main theme of previous chapters to maintain. This is a side of Christian apologetic which cannot be emphasised too much, and it is one which will always carry most force with ordinary men. So long as Jesus can enable men to triumph in life His hold upon humanity is assured.

Yet before He can enable any individual so to triumph, that individual must be laid hold of in some degree by the inherent beauty and power of the Divine in Christ. The coercive element can never be entirely left out. The fullest conviction of the Divinity of Christ is only attainable by making the experiment of living as though He were Divine, and going through the whole of life in discipleship to Him. When He has been put to all tests, including the last test of death, then the conviction will be utterly and finally impregnable. The Christian life is, therefore, an experiment, and the way of full Christian conviction experimental. Yet the experiment is almost bound to fail unless it begin with the inspiration of a unique vision of God in Jesus, the beauty of which we cannot resist and the right of which to our utmost reverence and allegiance we cannot deny.

IV

Confirmation of the Christian Conviction about Christ in other Lines of Thought

Our conclusion is, then, that given a proper analysis of religious consciousness and given the general grounds upon which we know anything to be real and true, the ascription of Divinity to Jesus is reasonable and proper. No other term would be adequate to the fact it is intended to describe, when that fact is seen in all its real relationships. Is it necessary to go further than this? For the purposes of Christian discipleship it is not, perhaps, necessary to go further, but for those who are seeking to make the strongest presentation possible of what is after all a very tremendous assertion, further confirmatory lines of argument and experience are possible and are of great value.

Thus we should naturally seek confirmation of our judgment concerning Christ in the consciousness of Christ

Himself as revealed in the Gospels. Something has been said to this effect in earlier chapters. The Gospels clearly imply that Jesus felt Himself to stand in unique relations both with God, as the "Son of God," and with man as the "Son of Man."

Again, to call Jesus Divine implies a philosophy of the Universe which must be related to science and philosophical thought generally. Something was said above about this in discussing the philosophy of value, and a further word may not be out of place here. The Christian consciousness has all along interpreted the Universe of men and things in the light of Jesus and of God as manifest in Him. But while the effect of this effort has been very illuminative, it has been so only in a relative degree, owing partly to the imperfect state of science and philosophy at each epoch of such creative activity, and partly also to imperfect methods of viewing the portrait of Christ Himself in the Gospels. To-day a Christian philosophy can make a very strong case for itself, both in relation to current philosophical thought and to current science. Its relation to a philosophy of value has already been pointed out. Along the same line is the modern insistence upon the category of personality, an insistence entirely congenial to the Christian outlook. As for science, the conflict between it and religion is, if not quite a dead issue, on a very different footing from what it was some years ago. It is now coming to be seen on both sides that the scientific and religious approach to reality are different and complementary. Science analyses the grammar of events, religion intuits synthetically and more after the manner of art their Divine meaning and purpose.[1]

This, however, brings us in sight of a criticism of the Christian affirmation about Christ, which comes from the side of science and philosophy and which must be met. It is that implied by the doctrine of *relativity*, using that phrase in its most general significance. Put

[1] Cf. Streeter, *Reality, passim.*

without any attempt at precision the criticism is, first, that the conception of the Absolute and Eternal God manifesting Himself within the limitations of history is self-contradictory and absurd; and second, that as a matter of historical fact, Jesus presents Himself to us subject to all the limitations of finite human personality and of His own age, and therefore cannot in the nature of the case be final. We have, therefore, to meet on the one hand a philosophical argument, and on the other an argument from the results of modern critical inquiry into the Gospels. But the answer to both attacks is the same, and springs directly from the fundamental position of this paper; and that the answer does spring so directly from it is perhaps further evidence that that fundamental position is along sound lines. In brief, the answer is that the religious consciousness is never and, if it rightly understands itself, never claims to be, a so-to-say naked contact with the absolute metaphysical being of God. It is fundamentally an intuition of a personal purpose, a certain Divine intention or Character behind and within phenomena.[1] It has to do, we repeat, with value and meaning, and with a Divine Will which, whatever it may be in its absolute nature, may be known by the values it seeks and the meaning it utters in human life. Religion deals with the absolute Being, but only through its apprehension of absolute character. To say that such an absolute character cannot impinge upon us and reveal itself to us through the finitude and relativity of historical facts is to say something which is not justifiable. It is a very commonplace function of our minds to discern final and universal values through finite particulars. We exercise that function in art, in our personal dealings with one another, and in other ways. To discern a perfect spiritual life in a Jew of the first century is no more mysterious and impossible than to discern the indefinable individuality

[1] Cf. A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 26. "It (religion) consists of a certain widespread apprehension of a character exemplified in the actual universe."

of my neighbour in his casual remarks in the train. Indeed, if God did desire to make a full revelation of His character to us, it is difficult to see how He could have done it save through the finite particularity of some one age of human history. The modern insistence then on the human finitude of Jesus does not touch our main contention. And if it be said that there is still an incoherency in the idea of the Absolute manifesting itself in the relative, the answer is that the denial of its possibility leads to a greater incoherency, which is the sundering of the universe into two irreconcilable and unrelated divisions, the absolute and the contingent, the eternal and the historical.

This leads us to say a word concerning the metaphysical relation of Jesus to the Godhead. Can anything worth while really be said on this subject? Opinions doubtless will differ, yet having minds we must use them upon every problem which presents itself to our thought. The previous chapter has dealt with this exceedingly difficult subject, but it should be pointed out that, even if we are among those who are sceptical of the value of such inquiries, the strength and cogency of the position outlined in this chapter, if it has any strength and cogency, remain. The validity of the Christian attitude to Jesus remains, even though we are content that His ultimate relation to the Godhead should, for our minds, remain veiled in impenetrable mystery.

In conclusion, let us return for a moment to the tacit assumption which, we saw, was involved in our consideration both of the coercive and pragmatic elements in the essential nature of religion. Without it religion would Christian attitude to Christ, the assumption, that is, that the Divine Holiness is the norm of our own human nature. There is no means of proving this assumption. The whole argument of this chapter is that it is given in the never have come into existence. Behind all man's religious life there has been a groping after fellowship with God, and progress in religion has been progress in under-

standing what God is like and what the conditions of that fellowship are. But all groping and striving in man is groping and striving after self-fulfilment. Unless we are able to say that man's self-fulfilment is in fellowship with God, religion becomes merely a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing. But we cannot prove it. Neither religion nor anything else can begin in a vacuum. Deny this assumption, and we cannot get a start with religion at all. But grant it, and we can see at least the beginnings of a rational account of religion from the earliest times, and in particúlar of the culmination of it in our love and reverence and obedience to Jesus Christ as unto God Himself.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER X

The Christian Faith and History

In this paper on Christ's right to our worship we have been largely concerned with meeting some of the difficulties which have been felt, both from the side of practical piety and from the side of philosophical thought, in the fact that Christian faith is essentially rooted in past historical events. It is perhaps worth while devoting some space to point out that this historical basis, so often regarded as a weakness, in reality constitutes part of the unique strength of Christianity as a Gospel *for human life.*

It has been argued that the basis of the Christian conviction about Christ is, first, an intuitive apprehension of absolute Divine character in Him, and, second, a pragmatic confirmation of that apprehension in the increasing victory over the world which it brings. These two elements must not be separated. Only a vision of God which lays hold of us by its own inherent and irresistible light can carry us to "victory" in face of the many dire challenges which life offers; yet only so far as it thus carries us to victory can it progressively become the master-light of all our seeing. Now, if it be asked what

is that vision of God which comes to us through Christ, and which gives us the victory, we might be disposed to answer that it is a vision of God as love. Yet to say that, true as it is, would be at once to become aware that it is quite inadequate to the uniqueness of the Christian message. For in many other religions the conception of God as love, of God as in some sense the friend "behind phenomena" appears, and finds often both moving and beautiful expression in prayer and ceremony and myth. All over the world, we are told—among the Bantus, the Pygmies, the Australian aborigines, the Indians of North America, the Chinese, the peoples of India, the Greeks, the Jews—the belief in father-gods or a father-god is to be found. It is true that in many cases this belief is now only dimly discernible behind a welter and chaos of other beliefs of a lower and often contradictory character—polytheistic beliefs, demonistic beliefs, beliefs in magic, and so on. It is true also that the conception of the Divine favour and love, if it is present at all, is often very shallow and on a low moral plane. None the less it remains a fact that belief in One behind life who is the friend of man is in some form or other so universal that it seems almost to be part of the original constitution of the human mind.

Wherein then does Christianity differ from these other religions in its message of the love of God? We might say in reply to this that Christianity, or rather let us say Christ, has decisively released the thought of the love of God from other beliefs about God, which are on a lower level, and contradict and obscure it. Christ's message is wholly comprised within the one idea of the Divine fatherhood. This would be true and importantly true. We might say further that Christ has given the idea of Divine love a depth and a passion and a moral purity such as it never had before. This also would be true and importantly true. Yet neither of these differences really goes to the root of the matter. There is a deeper and more fundamental difference, which underlies these other

differences, and without which they would count for very little, the difference, namely, that the vision of the love of God which Christ brings is given through certain historical events.

In order to appreciate this difference it is necessary to start from what is the most crucial, one might call it the infinitely pathetic, feature of man's belief in a "friend behind phenomena," in whatever form or in whatever setting that belief may appear—its continual failure to tally with the facts of life. We read of the primitive Congo negro refusing to worship Nsambi, the Good Creator, because "He does not trouble Himself about us. He does not love us. No doubt He created all things, but then He went away and asks no more about us." We read of Job crying "Let the day perish wherein I was born." The problem is the same in both cases, and runs in varying form and degree through the whole range of religious faith, from the primitive African up to the cultured and reflective Hebrew. Man dreams of a God who really cares for him, but sooner or later the dreams seems to crash on the stark and undeniable facts of human history. This is still the central problem of religion to many earnest minds in our own day. A belief in the fundamental goodness of things, in a God of love, is still, for the most part, native to the human heart. It rises spontaneously out of the soul of man, even as does the belief in the orderliness of nature and the reliability of her laws. It is fed, too, by much in life which is good and beautiful and full of joy. But continually it has to settle accounts with ghastly and undeniable facts which apparently cut right across it. It is impossible for a sincere and open mind to take belief in the holy love of God right into the midst of life without encountering there facts which give it the lie. Across the cherished belief there presently falls the chill shadow of a doubt, the doubt whether maybe, after all, the whole thing is but a phantasy and a dream.

It is instructive to observe the different ways in

which the religious mind has reacted to this disillusionment of facts. The reaction varies with the stage of cultural development which has been reached. The primitive mind had an easy mitigation of the problem at hand in its beliefs in deities of a less beneficent character, and in its technique of magic whereby some control at least of the evil happenings of life was guaranteed; the belief in a father-god, lacking practical relevance, fell into the background and was preserved only in the vague invocations of the traditional tribal ceremonies and prayers. So the chaos of life was reflected in the chaos of religious belief. A further alleviation of the problem was provided by the natural tendency of the primitive mind to project into the deity its own capricious emotional life; the Divine favour was regarded as a matter of incalculable and unreliable favouritisms, and thus, by being given a very low ethical content, was roughly squared with the harshness of facts. A more developed religious mind avoids these crudities, and tends to take refuge in a theory of rewards and punishments; it tries to see in every calamity which takes place, not the denial of Divine love, but the just reward of those who have ceased to deserve it. When that theory also seems to break up on the facts a further refuge is often found in some sort of apocalyptic hope of better things about to be brought to pass. At a still higher point of reflection the religious mind, failing to find its belief in God's love verified in historical facts, strives to maintain that belief by a continuous and unsuccoured energy of hope and faith. The frequent consequence of this is that either the belief becomes merely conventional, exercising little or no real determinative influence upon the life, or, in the end, it is surrendered as an unworthy phantasy construction of the mind, a myth in the bad sense of that term. This last attitude is particularly common in these days, when psychology has emphasised the frequency and laid bare the sources of the phantasy processes of the mind.

It would seem that as long as belief in the love of God is something which man first constructs in his own mind and then seeks to impose on history, there is litle chance of his escaping one or other of the developments above sketched. Either the belief must remain dim, unethical, superstitious, crudely anthropomorphic; or it must take refuge in an impossible theory of rewards and punishments, eked out by unverifiable apocalyptic hopes; or it must be maintained by an effort which in the end only makes it an added burden to the overburdened mind; or it must be surrendered as a mere figment of the imagination. Now, if this be so, then the crucial question for Christianity is whether the vision of the love of God which Christ brings comes to us *in some other way,* and so is able to escape the otherwise inevitable consequence. Christ's conception of the love of God lifts it, of course, as we have seen, above the unethical and anthropomorphic, and above crude theories of rewards and punishments; but is it really more credible for that reason? Its very loftiness and purity might make it in some ways even more difficult to square with the facts. Is it only another, the best and the last, of the tender dreams and imaginings of man's soul, or, we repeat, has it come to us in some other way?

This raises the question, What other way is there? How could the truth of the love of God be mediated to men, so that it is proof against the worst contradictions and challenges which history has to offer to it? Obviously there is only one way, and that is for it to be mediated in and through precisely those historical facts which seem to deny it. The revealing medium must be history itself, and it must be history, so to say, at its worst. Faith is truly succoured when it is enabled to grasp its object out of the heart of those things which have hitherto smitten it in the face, when it is no longer compelled by a tiresome effort to "read itself into" the evil of life, but, so to say, can "read itself out" of that evil with all the cogency of truth. This alone can reduce the

doubt whether faith is merely subjective phantasy, sufficiently to make it both proper and possible to ignore it, even though it cannot in strict logic eliminate and destroy it.

It is the claim of Christianity that Christ thus succours faith through His Cross. In this the climax of His conflict with evil, both these indispensable conditions of any real solution of the problem of the possible subjectivity of man's faith in the love of God are fulfilled; the Cross is historical and it is evil, very evil. We are here confronted with what is at one and the same time the supreme paradox and the supreme rationality of the Christian conviction about the Cross. From one point of view the Crucifixion of Jesus might seem to be the last and worst count in the indictment which history brings against the love of God. It might seem the darkest event of all the dark events of man's life, that one so good and true and so utterly full of faith should meet such a ghastly and monstrous fate. Yet from another point of view, as we have seen, the opposite is true; for only by first being an indictment of God's love could it ever become its justification. In order to become full of light to man in his peculiar need, it has first to be full of darkness, and we repeat, it had to be a real, historical event, and not merely a tragical imagining. It is in this paradox of the Cross that Christianity differs *toto cælo* from other religions. Christianity like them talks about the love of God; but it has at the heart of it a dark historical event, yet also an event that is full of light, full of light both because it is so dark and because it is historical.

In His Crucifixion Christ, by some unique, creative, spiritual originality, takes a horribly dark *fact,* a fact in which is included something of every evil of life—its sin, its physical pain, its premature death, its frustration of hopes and ideals—and transfigures it with light. He does this by thrusting into the centre of it all His own

perfect love and goodness and faith. One sees in the Crucifixion of Jesus pure goodness going deliberately to the place of its worst denial; one sees sin assaulting it in malignancy and hate, defeat threatening it, pain endeavouring to shake it, death mocking it, shame overwhelming it; and yet one sees it, as it were, winning all the time, for it takes these things and makes them but new opportunities for love to reveal the fathomless depths of its own nature. And then one sees that, though the sin and the premature death and the pain and the shame, taken by themselves, are evil, ugly things, yet with that love rising out of their centre, grasping them, accepting them, and transmuting them, the final spectacle is intensely beautiful and satisfying and good. And suddenly also this further perception comes to the soul, that that is what the love of God is really like. It is not so much something which is denied by the dark things, as something which finds in them its supreme opportunity to reveal its depth and glory and win its victory.

How exactly this perception comes to the soul it is in the last resort impossible to say. All that can be done is to analyse the conditions of its coming, and of its remaining a permanent possession of the spirit in spite of all challenges. Given the fulfilment of those conditions, then, for the rest, the matter must be committed to the inborn capacity of the soul to discern religious truth in and through events. In the end all religious argument and reflection have to conclude with the appeal to the native perceptiveness of the soul. The main purpose of this argument has been to show that one condition at least which must be fulfilled is that the religious truth of the love of God must be mediated through historical facts of a certain kind; and that, if this be so, then it is part of the unique strength of Christianity that the revelation it claims to bring to men is precisely through historical events of that kind. If the historicity of the events of Christ's life and the capacity of the soul to

discern in the personality of Christ the perfection of love be denied, then, of course, the whole argument breaks down. But the substantial historicity of the events recorded in the Gospels is here assumed, and the capacity of the soul to discern in the personality of Christ a Divine perfection of love has been discussed at length in the paper to which this is an appendix.

We conclude, then, that it is not the weakness of Christianity but its strength that it is rooted in history. Not the least important article in the Creed from the point of view of faith is *"sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus."*

It may be worth while in closing to refer briefly to Lessing's famous dictum that "a necessary truth for thought cannot be proved from a contingent fact of history," since this is sometimes quoted as though it raised a demurrer to the claim of Christianity to base its affirmations about God upon historical events. Such a thought, however, rests upon a misconception of the scope of Lessing's dictum and of the nature of religious truth. It is not claimed that the truth of the love of God is a necessary truth either in the sense that its opposite is inconceivable or in the sense that it can be demonstrated by a sort of mathematical cogency from given premises. The apprehension of God as Love is fundamentally a value-judgment, an intuition of character and meaning; and nobody would claim that such judgments are ever necessary in the sense above indicated. They may have a peculiar coerciveness of their own, yet by their very nature they require events to bring them home to the soul. We might use the analogy of the diagrams which seem to be an essential part of a geometrical demonstration. Such diagrams do not make Euclid's propositions true, but they bring home their truth to minds which apart from them would not be able to realise their truth at all. So it is with the events of the life of Jesus and above all with His death upon the Cross.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO HER LORD

Malcolm Spencer

"The doctrine of Christ's Divinity is the most practical of all truths, and is in intimate relation to the urgent racial and social problems of our time. If, in the human life of Jesus, God has been made manifest, then . . . God is as He was, and the way He judged of life is the way God judges. The ideals Christ taught, the values He revealed, all His character of grace and truth, are normative and final, and must have for all Christian people supreme authority. . . . It is useless to call Him Lord, Lord, unless we seek to do the things which He commanded; useless to proclaim Him very God and very man, unless we are trying to think after Him His thought of God and man . . . and show, in deed as well as word, that we are judging life, so far as we are able, by the values He reveals."—*The Doctrine of the Person of Christ,* by Sydney Cave, M.A., D.D., p. 247.

SYNOPSIS

Introduction. (1) Like the first Christians we postulate nothing about Jesus that would make Him other than human;* (2) yet we find in His unique mastery in life and death that which makes Him not only the pattern man but the Divine Saviour.

I. The Witness of Personal Living.

(3) Christ needs the witness of lives that reflect His sense of the Divine possibilities of every side of human experience; (4) and by their uncompromising opposition to all that thwarts His work for men. (5) In contrast, current Christian character lacks the dynamic force which alone can attest His Lordship.

II. The Witness of Preaching.

(6) Graphic historic preaching of Jesus is needed, from men constrained by the evidence of facts to acknowledge His uniqueness, His Divinity. (7) This Lordship of His must be shown to extend to the imperfect "orders" of life that prevail in the world. (8) This is part of the central tradition of Christianity; obscured for a century or two, but once more asserted in our day. (9) To this end we must remove the ban upon Christian preaching on these social subjects, and (10) equip our ministers to deal with them: not by adding courses of academic economics or political science, but by providing a Christian evaluation of current economic and political thought. (11) This is essential to the wide Christian philosophy of life the minister needs. (12) The apologetic thus needed in the twentieth century compared with that required in the second and third.

III. The Witness of Symbol and Sacrament.

(13) Symbolic witness is also needed, lest we reduce the stature of Christ to the measure of our own understanding of it and our own ability to reproduce it. (14) For Christians generally the Christian Doctrines and Sacraments provide such symbols of the infinite in Christ. (15) But we need some special symbols to declare in pictures that Christ brings salvation to society as well as to individuals. (16) Baptism and the Lord's Supper greatly help us here when seen in their historic setting.

IV. The Witness of Church Life and Practice.

(17) Church Life and Practice should also conspicuously attest the all-inclusive Lordship of Christ, and especially (18) by covenants among Church members to uphold the standards of Christ in daily life; and (19) by the provision of adequate practical means to discover the Christian way of life in difficult cases. (20) This would add reality and strength to every other side of Christian fellowship and worship. (21) And to this, rather than to the recovery of doctrinal or ecclesiastical orthodoxy, should we look for both spiritual revival and Christian unity.

Appendix.

(22) An Ante-communion Bidding.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO HER LORD

"FAITH in Christ," as a recent writer [1] has well said, and as this book has endeavoured to show, "is more than a doctrine; it commits us to a way of life. . . . There is inconsistency if, while we profess to believe in Christ's Divinity, we refuse to accept the values to which that faith commits us."

§ 1. *The first Christians* could make no mistake about this. They only *discovered Christ's Divinity because His way of life was so Divine.* It was so immeasurably better than any they had previously known that they were constrained at once to call Him "Lord" and ultimately to call Him "God." They saw Him first as a man, with man's distinctive limitations, grappling with man's perennial problems, beset with all the historical complications of social and political life, and yet supremely and convincingly "Master" in every one of life's situations. They saw Him so utterly man that they could not escape the comparison of His life with theirs. But His firm mastery of life at every point was so immeasurably above them that they were compelled to use higher than merely human categories to describe Him. These supra-human categories have changed from age to age, each witnessing to some fresh apprehension of His Divinity; but the Divinity of Jesus is not so potent when embodied in these derivative theological terms as it is when seen in His living personality flashing out in amazing word and deed. It is when we see Him to be Lord in just the same way

[1] Dr. S. Cave, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ,* pp. 245-6.

that the first disciples saw it that our confession of His Divinity carries with it the assent and worship of our whole personality; and we are constrained by an inner compulsion to reflect in our lives the excellence that we have seen in Him.

§ 2. The discovery of Christ's Divinity thus came first to men through their discovery of the unique glory of His humanity. *But this does not make Him merely man.* It does not mean that Jesus is just a man like one of us, different only, as the phrase goes, in degree. He is the One who, once for all, at the supreme crisis of history, fought the decisive battle of the human spirit for its Divine heritage. However He came to be what He was, He was the one and only one who has ever brought good and evil to decisive conflict on the plane of history. In this book we have been trying to see historically and psychologically what was the nature of His conflict and His victory. Theology has in the past tried to express the uniqueness of Jesus metaphysically; we to-day need to apprehend it in more personal, and so more directly religious terms.

When we thus realise the place of Jesus *in history*—be it ever so faintly—and then, as true sons of the Church of the centuries, remember that He is humanity's Saviour, and strive to realise afresh what that must mean, we discover with new amazement what a tremendous destiny is ours, and thereby gain a correspondingly new power of witness. It is a curious thing how men can believe themselves destined to live for ever, and yet acquire no fresh dignity and inspiration from that faith. But let a company come to believe that they are partners in a world-transforming enterprise, and they are at once ennobled and invigorated. And this is what Christianity means to all who realise what Jesus was historically. We are thereby made partners in that process of world-transformation which He carried through its first decisive stage. We are called to be living agents of the same transcendent

purpose in the later phases of its execution, having access to kindred spiritual powers.

The witness to Christ required of the Church to-day is thus fourfold; it needs to include (i) the witness of personal lives, so touched by His life that they inevitably point men to Him as their source; (ii) the spoken witness, that declares alike what power it finds Him wielding in history, and what demand it sees Him making on men and societies to-day; (iii) a witness to the mystery of His person, suggesting by sacrament and symbol the things about Him which so outrun our human power to apprehend the infinite that they elude definition; and (iv) the corporate witness of an appropriate Church life and practice, calculated to make His Lordship real and effective in the world.

I

The Witness of Personal Living

Out of a multitude of points upon which the world to-day needs the witness of Christian living, two especially may be singled out. If the world is to see what Christ means for it, it must see in the lives of Christians some clearer reflection of His unvarying sense of the Divine significance of life, and some continuation of His constant refusal to accept the world as it is at its present best.

§3. As to the first point, we have the unbroken witness of the New Testament and the early Church that for them Christ made all things new, because He made them aware of a Godward reference in all things. Henceforth they ate and drank unto the Lord. They were married or refrained from marriage as the concerns of God's Kingdom demanded. They had no interest and could have no part in anything that had no reference to the rule of God among men. *Jesus was intensely aware of God in everything, and so must His witnesses be.* He

read the Divine Fatherhood in every lovely feature of Nature. Human life when it was good evoked in Him a deep religious joy, and when it was bad, a deep religious indignation. He saw everything around Him either glorifying or blaspheming God. So He responded powerfully, nobly and decisively, to every person He touched and every incident of His experience. Similarly, those who are reckoned of His company to-day ought to show something of the same God-consciousness. They should be marked by an intensity and elevation of feeling about every aspect of life. They should feel its joys and sorrows acutely, and make a keen and positive reaction to every incident of their experience.

The world has come to think that a great deal of its life must be lived by customs and conventions that cannot in the nature of the case do honour to God. Thus a great deal of our social life is governed by an empty code of etiquette. And a great deal of our industrial life is handed over to the rule of a tradition too severely "practical" to have many sublime aspirations behind it: such aspirations are indeed banned from it as foolish sentiment. Social life thus becomes a realm of convention that blinds men to the sense of their spiritual destiny, and industry and politics become realms of sheer necessity, making no pretence to be parts of the realm of God. Life within these limits expresses no sense of the spiritual vocation of humanity and ministers to no spiritual development. How grievously it needs the testimony of personal living that is always actuated by the sense of Divine possibilities at every turn.

Jesus always thought of men and women as brothers and sisters in His Father's family. He was ashamed if they were dishonoured, and could never let any of them continue unheeded in sorrow, sin or neglect. A reverent and tender love marked all His own relations to people, and He could not tolerate any human relations from which that tender and reverent affection was absent. This high consciousness of the proper dignity of all human

beings in every relation of life has been and must always be a living heat of passion at the centre of every life that knows the steady companionship of Jesus. It may fade from hearts that know Christ only as a talisman for deliverance from the evils of the life to come; it may be overlaid for a time in true Christian hearts by the pressure and difficulty of life; but it cannot die out of hearts in which Christ is alive.

This consciousness of God and of God's relation to each human soul was native to Jesus. It was His own original possession; but it is derivative in us. We have, indeed, the capacity for such God-consciousness, wherein God is lovable to us for what He is, and man is lovable for what God is evoking in him. But it is only in the fellowship of Jesus that men in general have ever developed to any great extent this Divine capacity for love.

This love leapt into life in the hearts of the first Christians when Jesus was no longer with them. Thereafter they were nevertheless assured "by infallible proofs" that He was yet alive and accessible. With His blazing flame of holy sympathy He continued in perpetual communication with them. This is not the point at which to examine the method of that communication: suffice it that there was some channel of life through which the Spirit of Jesus became, through the fellowship of the early Church, the inner personal possession of individual Christians, so that when they no longer knew Jesus "after the flesh" they yet found the type of His life reproduced in them through their companionship in His Name. And the same possibility is ours still.

§ 4. *Christ's antagonism to the world-order,* so far as that order enchains humanity to a low type of life, is the second feature of His life and work to which personal witness is needed. Christ was done to death not by the lusts of men or by any of their private sins, but by their self-centred class and race prejudices and their perverted

religious and political ideas. The Sadducees wanted to perpetuate the temporal order that suited their caste. The Pharisees were unable to recognise any other doctrine than their own tradition. The people were the slaves of their own crude religious nationalism. So when Christ forced them to choose between Himself and their systems they rejected Him. Indeed it is largely in His conflict with the "systems" of His day that we find the historical significance of His life.

So, too, the Church is the first days showed something of Christ's own indomitable antagonism to the way of the world, wherever the way of the world was alien to the spirit of love. Whatever in the way of the world was gross, cruel, carnal or irreligious, they regarded as doomed to pass. For a time they expected some portentous transformation of the outward order to complete the change which Christ had inaugurated; but gradually they came to realise that the inward transformation of men and women into the likeness of Jesus, which they saw proceeding, was itself the evidence of the new age, and carried with it the promise of an ultimate and entire transformation of the outward order. Thus they came in the course of generations to realise that the transformation would be historical and gradual; but in proportion as they retained their characteristic fervour they retained their conviction that it would be complete and might be rapid.

The good Christian as we have portrayed him is thus a sharer in the life of Jesus in its supernatural and world-transforming aspects. He is necessarily discontented with the highest conventional morality of his time. He is always refusing compliance with national or class customs to a point of tension at which he must at times break down and surrender, unless reinforced by his fellow-Christians. He is particularly eager to eliminate evil from the world by the Divine method of crediting evil-doers with higher possibilities than they have yet shown evidence of, and suffering the consequences, and he is slow to acquiesce in any custom of trade or of government

which is not the outcome and expression of man's religious sense.

§ 5. *In contrast with this* the character that commonly passes for Christian to-day is often strikingly ready to acquiesce in the continuation of the accepted ways of the world, content if it can embroider a little of its own distinctive pattern on to the world's sackcloth. Christian opinion to-day does indeed value humility, disinterested service, patience, self-denial, the absence of resentment, and the forgiveness of personal injuries as essential to the Christian character. But it makes a very, very large concession to the demand for self-protection, the plea of a necessary conformity with the general customs of unsympathetic commercial rivalry, the defence of class privilege and national self-interest, and the assertion of the commercial and practical value of self-seeking and ambition. It has very little throbbing expectation of the reign of goodwill and peace, and very little trained insight into the strategy of Christian witness that might prepare the way for that supreme consummation. The prevalent ethic is nearer to that of Cicero than to that of Christ.

Christian piety is thus very often restricted to the cultivation of a pattern morality traditionally honoured, but not differing greatly from the general standard of good dealing in the world outside the Church. By contrast the early Christian piety demanded a readiness to face complete personal failure, or even disaster to the whole Christian community, rather than conform to the morality that lacked the essential Christian quality. So, too, the piety of the Middle Ages demanded sometimes an extreme self-mortification or quixotic chivalry. We moderns have discarded the ascetic, world-renouncing attitude of the Middle Ages, in the belief that humanity need not fear the snares of wealth or success; but we have not found out where to separate ourselves from systems of commercial, industrial and political life which reduce life

to the non-religious level. We have to get back to a piety which is as courageous, as affirmative, as costly as those of the best Christian past, without their narrowness or negative cast. To this end we want a habit of religious meditation and disciplined prayer that is directly relative to the task of advancing the frontiers of God's Kingdom where Christian values are specially imperilled and Christian principles specially assailed.

Even the social and political activities and enthusiasms of the modern Christian cannot always rank as witness for Christ. Often they are mere agreement with the political expedients and Utopian dreams of people and parties that have no real appreciation of the distinctively Christian standards; they are not based upon Christian faith or calculated to educe it. They seek merely material improvement in human circumstances, a mere kingdom of high wages and garden cities without any corresponding increase of goodwill and spiritual culture; and they seek to gain these ends by sheer force of voting strength which would leave huge minorities of unconvinced and unwilling opponents merely outvoted. Minds content with such solutions betray the fact that they are not formed in very devout communion with Christ.

The witness to Christ that we want in the world to-day is one that makes evident our faith in the kinship of man with God, one that takes seriously the Christian calling "to be as Christ was in this world," one that believes that all men are hungry for God and cannot rest till they find Him in all the varied relationships of their lives, one that continually offers men that "life eternal" that "knows Jesus," and therefore cannot bear to be at variance with His brethren.

This hope of a real and present salvation for the world is the ultimate logic of that long process of human thought which has focused upon the problem of the Person of Christ. We have at last discovered that Christ, in being at once human and Divine, was no strange Prodigy, combining incompatible elements in a single

personality. He was rather the earnest and prophecy of that fusion of the human and Divine which was begun in man's first creation and toward which all human evolution should aspire. The Divinity which was native in Christ is present in germ also in us, who are made in God's image. Indeed it is only in so far as there is a spark of Divinity in our humanity that we can recognise and worship the perfect Divinity of Christ. The unity of the human and the Divine in Christ is thus no metaphysical juggle or psychological puzzle: it is the unity of complete identity, the human reaching its true perfection, the Divine finding its perfect personal embodiment. Were it not so, there could be no full salvation for man, for the salvation man needs is nothing less than the rebirth of Christ in the Christian soul. Man must strive to be Christlike in all his relations and make all his social usages Christlike, if he is to retain the historic Christian faith in Christ. Neither Reason nor Conscience can be satisfied with less.

II

The Witness of Preaching

§ 6. The only preaching of Christ that can avail to-day is *preaching alight with the marvel of His Personality* as it was revealed in His historic life. The Divinity of Christ is not something to be proved logically and then made the basis of a new syllogism of good living. It is rather to be exhibited dramatically in a series of pictures, each of which exhibits the historic Jesus as the Lord of Life. Such preaching tends directly to create, in those who yield to its message, something of the like mastery of life.

Preaching which is to communicate this vivid sense of Christ's Divinity must itself be deeply conscious of that Divinity. The preacher who, in speaking of Christ, discards the bludgeon of tremendous theological assertion,

must know how to use the rapier of dramatic description. The art of narration doubtless demands its own particular technique; but the first need is for an intense realisation of the truth and force revealed in the incidents themselves. In some of these instances Jesus holds us spellbound. His mastery in them constrains us to rapt adoration. We are amazed and overcome by the sublimity of His bearing, the finality of His word. And through our witness to these manifestations of the Divine as we have felt them, we can constrain others to see Jesus as we have seen Him —as the Lord of Life.

There will be other incidents in which—through our blindness or because or the veil of misrepresentation enshrouding them in the New Testament narrative itself —we have no such sense of the Master's supreme handling of life, and others again in which we have not yet seen the essential human problem on which He was shedding the light of perfect truth. These latter cannot enter into our portrayal of Christ as Lord. Only in those situations in which we *have* been moved to self-forgetting worship can we preach the Gospel of His saving Lordship.

§ 7. Salvation is thus brought to men by the progressive unveiling of the Divine quality of Christ's action in this human scene. And to-day, when the social and political background of the human scene is so present to the normal human mind, Christian preaching needs to make evident *the same Divine quality in the social activity of Christ.*

Men will always be impressed by great quality of character displayed in the small situations of life, but to-day they need to see great character dealing with big situations too. Paul realised Christ's adequacy as the world's Saviour not only in His individual personal relations, but also, and quite as emphatically, in His rôle of history-maker, bringing whole systems of life and thought to judgment and resurrection. And we to-day, with our acute consciousness of the significance of the

collective life, need to see Jesus as Lord in this larger social and political world. Indeed many of us must see Him so before He can have for us anything but the mere name of Godhead. Jesus would not be fully convincing to the present age if He was uninspired and uninspiring, if He were merely conventional and undistinguished in relation to any of those social problems of the world which make up so large a part of the moral problem of to-day. And the Church's presentation of Christ must make good His sublime distinctiveness in these spheres.

For us children of the twentieth century His mastery of life lacks something necessary to the proof of His Divinity till we recognise the sublime ultimacy of His distinctive attitude to all the institutions of His time—whether of Jerusalem or Rome. If His recorded patriotism had been slight or narrow we should have been without the necessary witness to His Divinity. That this all-inclusive recognition of His Lordship is timely does not mean that it is a piece of special pleading, or a late phase in the evolution of Christianity. It is no innovation, it is historic Christianity,[1] especially important in the Christian witness of to-day.

There is danger, of course, in the attempt to present Jesus in these wider social relations. By placing Him in a merely fanciful historical situation we might render Him unconvincing. Or we might mar our witness to Him by a superficial rendering of the part He played in the politics of His day. We must watch Him participating in the larger affairs of Church and State with the same convinced and enlightened reverence that we bring to our appreciation of His personal contacts with the publican, the adulteress or the rich young ruler. No Christian who can easily identify Jesus with the programme

[1] Cf. Vol. XII of the Copec Reports, *Historical Illustrations of the Social Effect of Christianity* (Longmans, 1920, 2s.), and the companion volume, issued two years later, entitled *Social Discipline in the Christian Community*.

of his political party will present Him convincingly as the Saviour of the world.

We must therefore ponder the social and political situation in which Jesus figured till we realise that in it which is eternally significant for all social life. Thus, for example, behind the legalism of the Pharisaic code is the perennial spirit of compromise, that is ready to escape the task of progress by premature crystallisation of the laws of conduct at a point of necessary imperfection. So again, the Jewish Nationalist Imperialism is the recurrent disease of patriotism. When, therefore, Jesus faced these institutions, He faced the perennial evils of political expediency and national ambition. And because He dominated the supreme hour in history, meeting all its typical challenges in His own distinctive spirit, and thereby handling decisively all the crucial problems of social life, He can and does save those who may not be aware of the immediate historic significance of all that He did. In the New Testament itself we see Him potent in the lives of men who missed a great deal of His meaning and failed to attain to His full philosophy of life. They nevertheless found in Him the truth which was relevant to their own immediate problems, and satisfying enough to carry them through the social tangle of their own lives.

§ 8. If the early Christians did not generally understand, in any detail, the wider social and national implications of the kingdom of God, they did appreciate the point that, for the Christian, Christ must be all in all. If you cannot Christianise an institution, they would say, leave it alone, take no part in it, base no hope on it, derive no satisfaction from it. Thus they despised the honours that the Roman Empire could bestow, and set no store on the wealth that slave-holding might bring. In all essentials, therefore, and *to the utmost limit of their economic interests and their political understanding, the early Christians regarded Christ as the Lord, the Interpreter, the Key of all life.* When they had reason to speak of the

wider political system that they could neither control nor change, they used the language of apocalyptic. It was a Beast destined to perish one day and vanish before the oncoming reign of Christ.[1] Since then the witness of the Church has swayed this way and that.

Thus, in the trough of the wave of Christian degeneracy one or two hundred years ago, Christian people generally came to be content that the world should be subject to economic laws, presumed to be omnipotent, but confessed to be sometimes fiendish in their operation—and even to make profit out of the situation. That was, indeed, the supreme denial of Christ's Lordship, the supreme capitulation to worldliness. Far better the sometimes unpractical other-worldliness of the early Christian community than this complacent attempt to divide the honours of worship between God and mammon.

In our own day, however, the general temper of conscientious Christian thought has moved away from that position of moral indifference. It wants its social life to be more Christian, or at least it wants it purged of its grosser inhumanities; but it does not yet really find in Christ the clear exemplification of the Divinely intended pattern of its whole collective life. To make the claim of Christ to the Divine Lordship of life quite cogent and commanding in the present day, it is therefore necessary to avow quite clearly our belief that the goal of all our social evolution is a system of life which in its final perfection can only fitly be described as the Kingdom of God on earth, and which can only be inaugurated and sustained by a complete dependence upon His grace and power. We seek not merely better social conditions, we seek a Christian order of Economics, Politics and Citizenship. The declaration made recently by the great Conferences held at Birmingham (1924) and Stockholm (1925) stand witness primarily to this high spiritual hope

[1] Cf. article in *The Pilgrim* for January 1927, entitled "The Social and Political Implications of Early Christianity." Reprinted as a pamphlet, and now obtainable from the Industrial Christian Fellowship. Price 6d.

and purpose, to which their more detailed suggestions are entirely subordinate.

§ 9. If, however, Christian preaching is to set forth Jesus as the Lord of all Life, in defiance of all other claimants, and especially in refutation of the claim of that respectable worldliness that has been the Christian tradition of recent centuries, *some changes are needed in our tradition of preaching.*

Clearly the modern preacher needs to think much more profoundly than he has hitherto been expected to think about the true principles of all collective action. This does not mean that the preacher must be a meddler in every passing political event; but it does mean that he should be deeply versed in the larger ethical and spiritual issues which are constantly emerging in the political realm, so that he has a sensitive political conscience and a religiously enlightened political judgment. We are bound, therefore, to ask the question, Is the Christian minister equipped for such a task? We have to remember that for some generations the tradition of preaching has been in favour of a somewhat abstract presentation of Christ, narrowed down to an individual and largely sentimental doctrine of salvation, evacuated of much of its larger content. Happily the tradition of keeping preaching aloof from social life is weakening, and the Christian minister has been for long pressing in to claim his full prerogative. The elucidation of Christian truth in its social bearings is, however, so difficult and precarious a matter that not too many ministers have the right to command the confidence of their congregations in attempting it. For since there is no consensus of Christian thought on practical questions,[1] the Christian preacher

[1] The recent reassertion of the Christian way of life as the only way for the world by the Copec and Stockholm Conferences, is at present little more than an initial protest against past surrender, a gesture of reasserted liberty. It has not resulted yet in the systematic exposition of a distinctively Christian philosophy of society founded on Christian ideas. Copec Reports carry the analysis a certain distance; but, except in a few enclaves of the

is still unable to say much about it, lest he promulgate as Christianity what is only his private view.

§10. *To meet this difficulty the Christian minister may need a somewhat different training* from that which he is now generally receiving. He may need, to begin with, a revised attitude to traditional and formal theology, which he must regard as not in itself the complete truth, but rather a word-picture of a truth that can only be fully expressed in life itself. So, too, he must realise that ritual and cerémonial are but acted parables of this more vital truth about God's great gift to men—the gift of a Divinely inspired life. He should know that this symbolic and ritual truth will only sway men's consciences in so far as it is matched and paralleled by a Gospel about this inspired living which he can offer to men as its complement and embodiment. It is this inspired life which he has most especially to offer to men as the destined path for humanity, the way by which it can move surely to its true goal in God, and the only way along which it can be all the time companioned by Christ. He can then take up his ecclesiastical and theological studies with a fitting sense of their incompleteness till he has seen the counterpart in life of everything he sees in doctrine—including its counterpart in social life. He will be happy if he can learn his theology under the direction of minds that can say to him, This you can pass over lightly, it means little or nothing for the life of to-day; this, on the other hand, is full of meaning that is quite crucial to the modern man's problem of living; and this is the point at which the Church is to-day wrestling for a true understanding of what Christ means for our social life, and without which we cannot present the whole truth of our testimony.

To make possible this training in the Christian prin-

Church—ultra-Pacifist, Social, or Mediævalist—no completely articulated Christian theory of social and political life has been worked out since the industrial and commercial Revolutions of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

ciples of such social living, the average ministerial student may need to be relieved of part of the weight of his present subjects of study. The chapters above which deal with the experience and thought of the centuries from the first to the twentieth should surely be sufficient to give a certificate of demise to certain of the old terms and even issues in historical Christology. Could not some of these be merely tabulated in future as defunct notions, of interest to the historical student of antiquarian turn of mind, but not of sufficient importance to demand study from the general student of divinity? The fascinating history of the interplay of the Divine and the Human is to be studied not only in the life of Jesus, though primarily there, but also in all its prior and subsequent historical phases from the birth of life onward, through all the long process by which God has been at work in the world, in-filling individual personality and social fellowship with Divine life.

This does not mean that our ministerial studies should merely duplicate the studies of political economy, psychology or social science, as these are generally taught in the Universities; it means a spiritual evaluation of the principles at which these studies are arriving, or on which they are based, with a view to a Christian criticism of all in the world's practices that is inharmonious with the Truth revealed in Jesus, and to the understanding and encouragement of all that is in key with the revelation in Jesus.[1]

[1] To make possible such a training a great deal more concentration of thought is needed in some sort of Institute or College of Christian Sociology, which will carry out a systematic examination of our modern social institutions and customs in the light of the original Christian revelation and the subsequent history of Christian thought and life. No one at present is competent to interpret Christ in terms of modern social life except by a random gift of insight. There is no competent school of Christian political thinking, and no possibility of convincing Christian witness to the best mind and conscience of the day till the defect has been remedied. The establishment of such an Institute is at present being attempted both in this and other countries, though as yet on a very modest scale. Meantime Christian preaching must do the best it can with its present limitations.

§ 11. *Such studies* are beside the point if they are regarded as mere addenda to the fundamental matters with which theology deals. They are to be conceived rather as *essential elements in the true conception of the purpose of God* for the world and for the Church. In the words of a Memorial submitted by the Copec Research Group on the Social Function of the Church at the Lausanne Conference on "Faith and Order" (August 1927):

> "We conceive the Social Purpose of the Church not in antithesis to its Religious Purpose, nor as a separate appendix or corollary to it; but as an integral and vital part of an indivisible whole. We desire to see the immediate social aspects of the Church's mission emphasised not at all in contrast with its eternal spiritual aspects, but precisely in clearer illustration and objectification of these ultimate aims . . . a witness to the nature of the redeemed life, which Christ has made possible for man in this world, through the transfiguration of its art, its commerce, its government, as well as its home life and education, and every other of its social activities and institutions.
>
> "Such a ministry is surely not a matter of only slight or secondary importance, since it ultimately concerns the Church's conviction as to the actual pragmatic content of 'salvation' and the Church's work of bringing to pass the sanctification of the redeemed soul. It would serve also an important evangelistic function; in that it would help to demonstrate the centrality of the Church and of the Gospel in all the great issues of life in which at present men are longing for light. The aim is not to impose upon men a more elaborate and burdensome law of behaviour. It is to declare to men the good news that in Christ they may find the way to live as befits the sons of God in every human relation, and so realise as a Gift of God a divinely conditioned culture and a divinely ordered civilisation."

§ 12. We have here a *parallel to the situation in the second and third centuries,* when the Church's thought about Christ was being formed by interaction with the living thought of that age. In those days the idea, outside Christianity, that most largely upheld and inspired the true life of humanity, was the idea of the Divine Reason immanent and ever seeking fuller immanence in the life of man. The "Logos" philosophy of human personality was the basis of all the old world's reasoned hopes of human progress, and it had to be assimilated to the Christian conception of Christ before either it or Christianity could realise their full possibilities. The end of that process, as we know, was a faith that all things human strive, by an inner principle of their being, to achieve a harmony and perfection which yet they are thwarted from achieving, by another inner principle of evil that they cannot gainsay. In Christ the principle of good, of harmony, of truth, of reason and of love, reached such perfection, and the principle of evil was so utterly mastered, that He became the author of new life for the individual, and of a new age for man. Through Him the principle of *Divine Reason,* everywhere at work in the world, is thus supplemented by a principle of *Divine Grace* which saves it from defeat and carries it to consummation. This is the position reached at last by Christian thought as it finds systematic expression, in the fifth century, in the writings of Augustine. The *Præparatio Evangelica* of universal human evolution is thus recognised, whilst the word of the Gospel and the Church as its special sphere are set forth as the means to make good what most men confess to be wanting in the general life of the world.

The parallel to this situation in our own day arises from the concurrent testimony of many sciences to the fact of an evolutionary process of human development that can be traced through all time, and still goes haltingly forward toward its dimly visible goal. These sciences,

quite apart from the direct inspiration of Christian dogma, find an evolution of human character proceeding step by step with an evolution of social life. To this evolution the principle of human reason seems as if it ought to be, but is not quite, an all-sufficient guide. Modern thought sees human character as the product of the social environment in which it is shaped, and thinks it sees also how both can be amended by due reflection on the good and evil of life. Yet it sees also how easily the personal and social harmony that ought to be possible is sacrificed to human perversity or passion.

In this situation it seems as though the first great need of a sound Christian philosophy is to ally itself with the truth in this great body of thought. It is true that personal character is largely shaped in the first instance by the social environment in which it is cradled, and afterwards moulded by the social purposes that it adopts. The conversions that disregard this all-embracing discipline of personality are generally unstable, unsatisfying, and short lived. The complete salvation of man depends therefore upon the salvation of his social environment.

Not till this truth is fully admitted will the Church give itself whole-heartedly to the pursuit of a Christian order of society—a Christian way of living both at work and at play. And only when it has done so will it find itself able to assimilate and so consummate and dominate the modern philosophy of life—as the Christianity of the early centuries consummated and dominated the ancient philosophies. No body of truth can long hold the minds of men if it is not the fitting crown of the social and moral philosophies which they consciously or unconsciously believe. The moral philosophies which to-day seek human progress through the devotion of psychological and sociological knowledge to the realisation of a better human culture are not so erroneous that they are destined to crumble away. They can be supplemented and consum-

mated by Christianity; but they cannot be superseded or cancelled by Christianity. Christianity needs to be presented as the way by which both the organisation of our human minds and the organisation of our social institutions can be perfected, through the engrafting of the fruit-bearing principles of Christianity upon the common stock of social striving.

This correlation of Christianity with the truths of historical and social science will be bound to leave a special sphere for the special gifts that are mediated to man through the faithful and loving worship of Christ in the fellowship of His Church. In the twentieth century, as in the fourth or the fourteenth century, man is still in need of a salvation that he can only obtain from above, by frequent turning away from the wisdom enshrined in the world as it is, to the Love that is enshrined only in the Revelation of Christ, Who is the heart of the life of the world.

III

The Witness of Symbol and Sacrament

§ 13. And now we should acknowledge a very real danger of the line of thought we have been hitherto pursuing. In preaching the detailed applications of Christianity, *it is all too easy to obscure the central facts of the Christian revelation in itself.* This is liable to happen wherever the mind of the preacher becomes obsessed with the minutiæ of his own historic interpretation of Jesus, but still more when he is obsessed by the practical problems of his own age.

Too much modern appreciation of Jesus consists in reading into His life and character what we take to be the best thought of our own age. Injustice is done to Him when we make Him a partisan in the social controversies of our own time. We belittle Him if we seem to confine the meaning of His life to our practical

corollaries for the solution of twentieth-century social problems, and make the plane of history the only plane of reality. When we see Jesus aright, we see in Him revelations of goodness and beauty which strike us dumb with reverence, for they confront us with a vision of reality which defeats all description and oustrips all possibility of translation into terms of immediate conduct. *Our witness to Jesus can only be consummated through Symbol and Sacrament, because He is so ineffably sublime.*

§ 14. *The Symbols and Rites of Christian worship* provide the imagination with vessels in which it can store its intuitions of God's love and power, and count on finding them there. They thus become the instruments and occasions of a constantly renewed surrender of personality to the incoming of the Divine life. Rightly used, they are the greatest extensions of language, the highest expressions of the "Word." Indeed we must have these symbols, because the life of God passes beyond definition or comprehension. The "symbol" in religious worship has been the means of maintaining a deep God-consciousness in multitudes of those who have lacked the capacity for clearness of intellectual thought.

It is probably just here that Christian Dogma plays its greatest part in the service of Christian living. Theology may be the instrument of exact thinking for the experts, but it is chiefly of value as a kind of high poetry for the multitude. It makes the mind aware of mysteries which it dimly enshrines. It clothes the concept of Christ's personality in sublime and suggestive imagery. It defeats its purpose when its claim to exactness is overstrained, because attention is then focused on the form of the truth to the detriment of the central fact. When a Christian doctrine becomes the subject of Christian controversy, half its usefulness is already gone; and this is as true of a meticulous modernism as it is of a meticulous traditionalism; both alike are expressions

of a misplaced intellectualism. Taken *au pied de la lettre,* a dogma becomes an idol of the mind. But taken liberally and in not too literalistic a fashion, our doctrines about Christ are the almost indispensable means of recalling the truths we live by and providing means for the expression of our worship.

This is not to say that all the old doctrinal statements about Christ are of equal value, or that none others are needed. Some of these statements are timeless, but some are very markedly dated. The great phrases in the New Testament which speak of Jesus as the Word or Wisdom of God, the express Image of God, the Power of God, the Captain of our Salvation—and other such words of worshipful description—are of undying significance just because they are not too rigorously defining. Some, indeed, of the more simple of the great dogmatic statements about Christ have passed into the vocabulary of the Church as integral parts of its treasured inheritance of holy symbol. Others, on the contrary (such as the Athanasian Creed) are sharply limited in their devotional value, because they depend for their meaning upon the knowledge of the niceties of Greek metaphysic, and of the obsolete heretical opinions against which they were pitted. Some New Testament terms are dated and coloured by their connection with a religious system of sacrifices now obsolete, whilst other historical statements construe the Person and work of Christ from a standpoint of legalistic morality that has long ceased to convince the consciences of men. Statements that are thus dependent upon given interpretations are useful only to those whose exceptional learning enables them to understand them, or those whose lack of critical intelligence enables them to use them inexactly. To the rest—and that is to the majority—they are a stumbling-block.

§ 15. To-day especially, we need *symbols of the historical and sociological meaning of Christ to the world.*

In many student circles and in other circles also, Blake's *Jerusalem* has to-day more power than many of the orthodox Christian symbols to stimulate Christian faith. It has this power because it stirs the imagination to lay hold of the saving truth that Christ calls and commissions men to "prepare the way" for God's real reign or Kingdom in their own and every other country as part of His world-kingdom. Such special symbols are, of course, not adequate to the complete representation of Christ; but they are in their way essential. If we use them in association with our more traditional symbols, these latter are themselves enriched with a more positive historical significance.

§ 16. *The great Sacraments of the Christian Church,* are rich in meaning for the social salvation of man—especially when *historically understood.* The Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper are, indeed, full of personal meaning and spiritual appeal of every kind; but they are of fullest meaning only to those who are alive to their historical significance.[1] *The rite of Baptism* takes us back to the thought of Jesus as the inaugurator of God's universal kingdom upon earth, and of His Divine power to baptise or suffuse men with that creative power of a supernatural or unworldly life. Thereby symbolically we enter the Church, as the special sphere of such grace, that we may at once or in due season ourselves experience, and may take our part in releasing, the Divine energies for the transformation of the world. *The Lord's Supper* is the spiritual re-enactment of that great moment when Jesus made His final effort to carry the slow minds and reluctant wills of His disciples with Him as He advanced, with supreme faith and obedience to the Father's Will, to accept, as the true Paschal Lamb of God, the Cross of redemptive self-offering, and so to win the victory that should bring deliverance from

[1] Cf. Dr. Vernon Bartlet's paper on *Christian Sacraments,* read at the Lausanne Conference on "Faith and Order," in August 1927.

the Egypt of sin, and open the way to the Holy Land of God's full reign or Kingdom. When, then, we truly discern what we are doing in this Sacrament, we meet Him at that divinely provided trysting-place of the Spirit—and are the more enabled to give ourselves to be made partakers in the travail and the triumph of His great conflict with the evil of the world. In and through that Sacrament as a whole, we put ourselves again, as far as may be, in the situation wherein Christ set forth the full scope and quality of the Divine Love. Whereupon that ever-present Divine life of Christ—that is always and everywhere ready to be communicated from the Divine side by the Spirit of God—becomes afresh and more deeply effective in us, as we "feed on him in our hearts by faith." The symbolism of a dramatic foreshadowing by Christ Himself of His redeeming self-giving, enriched as it is by the added memories of Gethsemane and other great moments in the last stages of Christ's Passion, carries more meaning than any mere doctrinal description of the Person and Work of Christ. Such a Sacrament brings Christ to us in living Presence.

In thus dwelling on the value of the Sacrament of Communion *par excellence,* it is well thus to make plain its nature as "witness," divinely given by Christ the Head, and continued by His Body, the Church. For it is possible to receive the Sacrament in a way which implies that such receiving is itself the real end of life, and life itself only a preparation for or sequel to this hour of sublime communion. Round such interpretations of the Sacrament there gather strange, old-world theories of change wrought within the material or ritual elements which enter into this deeply symbolic rite. But we have not so learned Christ. For us the potency of the sacramental act depends not upon any peculiar virtue attributed to the material elements used, which throughout remain in themselves but symbols of the personality of Christ given for us then. Rather it depends upon the degree to which the

participating community, and each participating soul, therein submit to the ever-active Life whose quality was revealed in Christ's death upon the Cross, the life which through Him we have pulsing in us and flowing through us into the whole life of the world.

To say that such an interpretation reduces this Sacrament to a "mere memorial" is to ignore the Spirit's part in it. No words can adequately express the living present communion thus offered to the believer. No theories about it can ever do justice to the profound mystical experience it is capable of mediating when the soul yields itself simply to the influence which the symbolism is meant and fitted to exert on our complete nature, as God speaks to the soul through it. The essential Christian witness is that in and through the sacramental service union with Christ in a specially deep sense is available. To insist on any theory of sacramental grace is to incur the danger of preaching, not Christ crucified, but a bit of metaphysical speculation; it is to substitute man-made theory for divine fact—whether the theory be Protestant or Catholic in type.

But we believe that the grace of the Sacrament is dependent not on any such theory, nor upon any special kind or mode of life-giving thereby guaranteed. It depends upon the degree to which it steeps the soul in a genuine experience of communion with Christ, and so makes it more participant of the same grace that animates the Church in all its life. It is due to the Spirit of Jesus, which presses in upon us with all the urgency of Divine love whenever men lay themselves open for His incoming.

As regards the Church's share in mediating the grace available through Sacraments, while they do not depend in essence on the Church at all, in practice their full efficacy depends in part upon the vitality of the witnessing Church which administers them. The Sacraments of a live Church induce life more abundantly than those of a Church that is inert.

IV

Witness through Church Life and Practice

§ 17. The modern witness to Christ demands *a Christian community that repudiates the infidelity of recent centuries regarding the practicability of the Christian way of life.* It should be so deeply conscious that in Christ it has come to God that it is always eagerly seeking and joyfully finding opportunities to bring Christ's values to expression in all the life of the world. Merely verbal assertions of faith and fidelity will not avail, for they are all vitiated by the long apostasy of the Church in these practical questions, to-day so centrally significant. Even our Sacraments are full of associations of the same comparative infidelity. So that it is not too much to say that for centuries Christians have allowed even the associations of their higher worship to confirm in themselves the expectation of Christian glory only hereafter, or only in the inner life, or, at the best, only in the private life of the individual, and never really in the public life of the world. A full witness to Christ is only possible in and by a Church that shows by its practice that it is grappling practically with this inherited infidelity.

Just how a Church should express its recovered determination to make Christ the Lord of all Life, it is not easy to say: but it would seem as though the following points should be observed. At least the Church should make explicit that its very being as the Body of Christ commits it to Christ's ends as a body, and so binds all its members to review the whole range of human activity from the Christian standpoint and assert anew the Christian standard in all life's relationships. This should involve a progressively definite quest of a specifically Christian practice in all social relations, including trade and international dealings, and a correspondingly definite repudiation of ways that are unchristian; so that it shall be manifest that Christianity stands for a completely

distinctive way of life. Life and conduct can never exhaust the meaning of the eternal and the holy: but these religious concepts speedily become tenuous and sentimental unless they give form and character to all we do.

§ 18. To this end, the Church should make clear and effective *the "Covenant" relation between its members,* in virtue of which they are bound to help and stimulate one another to exemplify the Christian way of life in all relationships, and especially in those relationships where the authority of Christ is most called in question to-day. There is now an evident stirring of desire in the Church for some such strengthening of the individual Christian will to specifically Christian conduct. It is shown in various groping attempts to bind together those who are specially conscious of a vocation to Christian experiment—in industry, for instance. This movement, still confined to a few people, too widely scattered to influence the normal course of Christian fellowship, needs to become a normal activity in each congregation. It could do much to counteract the impression created by pietistic or ritualistic exaggeration, that the religion of the Churches is a sentimental thing. But the impression of relevance to life might be a good deal further strengthened if in the devotional life of our Churches the belief in a Christian way of life and the determination to seek it were affirmed in unmistakable ways.

Some of the most effective associations of Christian people to-day are based not upon a common creed but upon a common purpose. Thus the Student Christian Movement is based on an attempt "to understand the Christian faith, to find the Christian way, and to live the Christian life," such an attempt presupposing that that truth is revealed and that life made possible. This bond of shared devotion to a faith and an ideal may well be expressed also in some sort of Covenant, in which a whole congregation or a guild within a congregation expresses

its joint committal to Christ and His way of life. Thus "The Free Church Fellowship" has a Covenant in which it expresses its determination "to seek after the glorious will of God for their own generation," and thus "to face to the full our liability for the furtherance of the Gospel at home and abroad, and for the fulfilment of the law of Christ in all human relations—social, economic and international"; and this Covenant has been reproduced in various forms for the use of local Christian congregations. Some reaffirmations of faith in this practical fashion might even be introduced with profit into the Communion Service itself, or rather into the ante-Communion Service, as has been done by the Free Church Fellowship, and with sundry adaptations in Congregational worship also.[1]

§ 19. Further, and especially, in view of the baffled and often unconsciously sub-Christian state of mind of average Christian people on many crucial questions of conduct, there is need for a *very large development of Christian conference* on the practical problems of Christian conduct in the modern world, both in congregational meetings and on a wider basis. The amount of attention given by the Church to such questions, for example, as Disarmament or Industrial Conciliation, shows quite clearly that the Christian desire for peace is still on the level of loose sentiment, without any backbone of Christian faith or confident practical purpose. Just because the Christian minister is, as we have seen, still generally unable for various reasons to declare from the pulpit what is the Christian way of life, there is, therefore, all the more obligation on the Christian community to provide for the regular practice of Christian conference on all points about which the Christian way of life is disputable. Nothing short of a very energetic and courageous programme of this kind will suffice to prove to the world that Christ is held by Christians to be the

[1] See Appendix to this chapter, pp. 337-8.

world's universal Saviour. If we cannot declare in what the full application of the Christian salvation consists, we can at least show that we are seeking to find out. Short of that we virtually deny Christ's full Lordship of life, as indeed we do to-day in the procedure of more than half the Churches of our land.

Whilst such conference should cover every sort of pressing and disputed social issue, it should, in order to keep a Christian perspective, deal predominantly not with the question what we want others to do to put the world right, but what we ourselves can do to bring the grace of God into it by our own personal faithfulness. Thus the primary sphere for Christian conference is as to the possibilities of distinctively Christian types of conduct in the business and political life of our time. And here we would recall what has been said earlier about the distinctive quality necessary to make social conduct a true witness to Christ.

§ 20. A Christian congregation fully attempting to seek the Kingdom of God in every sphere of life, would achieve *a greater sense of fellowship among its members* than is at present usual. As it is, the sense of intimate fellowship is largely confined either to those who are temperamentally "devotional" or to those who are active in Church work. It does not include the much larger number of those whose service to God is rendered chiefly in conscientious living outside Church walls. If these could be made more fully aware of a Christian objective in their lives, the Church would find its united worship vibrant with a new quality of realism, in which men would be more conscious of real self-offering to God and more attentive to the emergence of new and imperative practical obligations. The Sacraments, too, of such a people would be Sacraments which did veritably (in Baptism or Confirmation or the like) initiate their members to a communal attempt to achieve God's Kingdom upon earth, and (in Holy Communion) express and reconstitute

a communal rededication of life to the establishing of the Kingdom for which Christ died, and to the operation of the power that raised Him from the dead.

§ 21. Finally, the recovery of this real and uncompromising spirit of Christian faith and dedication in the Churches generally would not only restore some of the lost authority of Christian truth and some of the lost power of Christian Sacrament and worship; it would result in a corresponding *accession of interchurch fellowship.*

To us it seems that the Church's hope of inner revival and of corporate unity turn alike on this one matter of making the Christian way of living a serious, practical pursuit for which the Church unites its members. This will never detract from the true spirit of worship—with all its rightful emphasis upon the holy and eternal—if only Christian prayer and preaching will keep the Jesus of history, and His own concept of God's Kingdom, in the heart of Christian worship and meditation. Apart from this fearless declaration of His central place in the historic evolution of our social life, no restatement of doctrine, no accentuation of ritual devotion, can demonstrate the full authority of Christ. Doctrinal restatements and devotional developments may well go hand in hand with a heightened practical devotion and a newly prophetic life; but they are of little use alone. We do not expect either the revival of Church life or the unity of the Church to come through any steps backward towards a more uniform witness to the creeds or rites of the past. We expect them to come rather through some great forward-looking avowal of faith in Christ as Lord in all the life of the world.

All these developments must, however, be true to the genius of the Gospel. The witness we bear to Christ must indeed be a piece of good news. We are not called primarily to elaborate the message of human duty in all the varied relationships of life. We are called rather to hold up a way of life that is itself convincing to the

deepest heart of man, as the way of life for which alone God can have made him, and to declare through Christ the possibility of his receiving grace and power to attain to it in marvellous measure, and it may be with surprising speed. Nothing less is adequate to our faith in Christ as the Lord of Life—Lord indeed as Lawgiver but Lord also as Saviour.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XI

An Ante-Communion Bidding (see p. 334)

§22. "Beloved of God and Fellow-disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, in preparation for this Communion, let us remember our birthright and our calling in the Church of God.

"How that we are called to be fellow-members of God's great family, and faithful servants of His glorious Kingdom, on earth and in heaven.

"How that we are bidden to love one another as Jesus first loved us, and to be, in word and deed, such as He was upon earth.

"How that we should therefore serve one another in love, forgiving one another when we are provoked and helping one another to bear His yoke and do His bidding.

"How we should especially help the weak and the stranger, should love our enemies, and fight for those who are oppressed.

"And let us remember our particular calling in the present day, to seek after the glorious will of God for our own generation, to heal the wounds in the broken body of Christ, to link Church with Church and nation with nation, to work for peace between the peoples, and for brotherhood among all ranks of men, realising the promise of God who said, 'I will put my Spirit in men, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, and I will make a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

"And remembering this our calling, let us in silence examine ourselves whether indeed we be in the way of the Lord, each one humbly and deliberately, but with good hope and faith, looking into his heart and making his confession of unworthiness in God's sight—that He, who wills the perfecting of all who turn unto Him, may work His good pleasure in us, in this hour."

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